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# CHRISTIAN CHARITY EXPLAINED:

OR, THE

## INFLUENCE OF RELIGION UPON TEMPER STATED

IN AN EXPOSITION OF THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE  
TO THE CORINTHIANS.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES,

AUTHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHER'S PRESENT, &c.

"Truth and Love are two of the most powerful things in the world; and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of Truth, and the silken cords of Love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence, whether they will or no."—*Cudworth*.

## PREFACE.

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A work which the author published a few years since, on the Duties of Church Members, concludes with the following sentence:—"Let us remember, that HUMILITY and LOVE are the necessary fruits of our doctrines, the highest beauty of our character, and the guardian angels of our churches." To prove and elucidate this sentiment, and to state at greater length than it was possible for him to do in that treatise, the nature, operations, and importance of CHARITY; he was induced to enter upon a series of Discourses on the chapter which is the subject of this volume: these Discourses were heard with much attention, and apparent interest. Before they were finished, many requests were presented for their publication; a promise was given to that effect, and the intention announced to the public. On a further inspection of his notes, the author saw so little that was either novel, or on any account worthy to meet the public eye, that he had for two years quite abandoned his intention of printing. Circumstances which need not be mentioned, together with frequent inquiries from his friends after the forthcoming treatise, drew his attention again to the subject a few months since, and revived the original purpose of sending from the press the substance of these plain and practical Discourses. That intention is now executed; with what results, the sovereign grace of J-hovah, to which it is humbly commended, must determine.

The author offers this volume primarily and chiefly to his own friends, to whom it is dedicated. He has, however, by publishing it, placed it within the reach of the public, though he can truly say, that he does not expect much interest to be produced by his work, in the minds of many, beyond those who are prepared, by friendship, to value it above

its intrinsic merits. One thing is certain, the subject is confessedly important, and it is as plain as it is important. It requires little argument to explain or to defend it; and as for eloquence to recommend and enforce it, the only power that can render it effectual for practical benefit, is the demonstration of the Spirit: without this aid, a giant in literature could do nothing, and the feeblest effort, by such assistance, may be successful. Too much has not been said, and cannot be said, about the *doctrines* of the gospel; but too little may be said, and too little is said and thought, about its *spirit*. To contribute something towards supplying this deficiency in the treasures of the temple, the author offers this small volume; and though it be but as the widow's two mites, yet, as it is all he has to give, as it is given willingly, and with a desire to glorify God, he humbly hopes that however it may be despised by those, who he rejoices to know, are so much richer than himself in intellectual and moral affluence, it will not be rejected by him, who more regards the motive than the amount of every offering that is carried to his altar.

The author can easily suppose, that among many other faults which the scrutinizing eye of criticism will discover in his work, and which its stern voice will condemn, one is the tautologies, of which, in some places, it appears to be guilty. In answer to this, he can only remark, that in the discussion of such a subject, where the parts are divided by such almost imperceptible lines, and softened down so much into each other, he found it very difficult to avoid this repetition, which, after all, is perhaps not always a fault—at least not a capital one.

Edgbaston, April 22, 1828.



# CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE OCCASION OF PAUL'S DESCRIPTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

THE credibility of the Gospel, as a revelation from heaven, was attested by miracles, as had been predicted by the prophet Joel. "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and the handmaidens in those days, I will pour out my Spirit." This prophecy began to receive its accomplishment when our Lord entered upon his public ministry,—but was yet more remarkably fulfilled, according to the testimony of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance;" and still continued to be fulfilled till the power of working miracles was withdrawn from the Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ ceased not, during his continuance on earth, to prove, by these splendid achievements, the truth of his claims as the Son of God; and constantly appeal to them in his controversy with the Jews, as the reasons and the grounds of faith in his communications. By him the power of working miracles was conferred on his apostles, who, in the exercise of this extraordinary gift, cast out demons, and "healed all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease." Christ also assured them that, under the dispensation of the Spirit, which was to commence after his decease, their miraculous powers should be so much enlarged and multiplied, as to exceed those which had been exercised by himself. This took place on the day of Pentecost, when the ability to speak all languages without previous study was conferred upon them. The apostles, as the ambassadors and messengers of their risen Lord, were authorized and enabled to invest others with the high distinction; for, to confer the power of working miracles, was a prerogative confined to the apostolic office. This is evident from many parts of the New Testament.—But while apostles only could *communicate* this power, any one, not excepting the most obscure and illiterate member of the churches, could receive it; as it was not confined to Church officers, whether ordinary or extraordinary. It is probable that these gifts were sometimes distributed among all the original members of a church: as the society increased, they were confined to a more limited number, and granted only to such as were more eminent among the brethren, till at length they were probably confined to the elders; thus being as gradually withdrawn from the Church as they had been communicated.

These miraculous powers were of various kinds, which are enumerated at length in the epistle to the Romans. "Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion (analogy) of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; or he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." They are set forth still more at length, in the

twelfth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal: for to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of Spirits; to another divers tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."

It is not necessary that we should here explain the nature, and trace the distinction, of these endowments—a task which has been acknowledged by all expositors to be difficult, and which is thought by some to be impossible. But vague and general as is the idea of them which we possess, we can form some conception of the strange and novel spectacle presented by a society in which they were in full operation. They constituted the light which fell from heaven upon the Church, and to which she appealed, as the proofs of her divine origin. It is not easy for us to conceive of any thing so striking and impressive, as a community of men thus remarkably endowed. We may entertain a general, though not an adequate, idea of the spiritual glory which shone upon an assembly, where one member would pour forth, in strains of inspired eloquence, the profoundest views of the divine economy, and would be succeeded by another, who, in the exercise of the gift of knowledge, would explain the mysteries of truth, concealed under the symbols of the Jewish dispensation;—where one, known perhaps to be illiterate, would rise, and in a language which he had never studied, descant, without hesitation and without embarrassment, on the sublimest topics of revealed truth; and would be followed by another, who, in the capacity of an interpreter, would render into the vernacular tongue all that had been spoken; where one would heal the most inveterate diseases of the body with a word, and another discern by a glance the secrets of the mind, and disclose the hypocrisy which lurked under the veil of the most specious exterior. What seeming confusion, and yet what real grandeur, must have attended such a scene? What were the disputations of the schools, the eloquence of the forum, or the martial pomp, the accumulating wealth, the literary renown of the Augustan age of the Roman Empire to this extraordinary spectacle? Yea, what was the gorgeous splendor of the temple of Solomon, in the zenith of its beauty, compared with this? Here were the tokens and displays of a present though invisible Deity; a glory altogether unearthly and inimitable, and on that account the more remarkable.

For the possession and exercise of these gifts, the Church at Corinth was eminently distinguished.—This is evident from the testimony of Paul,—"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus; that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift;" and in another place he asks them "What is it, wherein ye were inferior to othe



Churches?" It is, indeed, both a humiliating and an admonitory consideration, that the Church which, of all those planted by the apostles, was the most distinguished for its gifts, should have been the least eminent for its graces; for this was the case with the Christian Society at Corinth. What a scandalous abuse and profanation of the Lord's Supper had crept in! What a schismatical spirit prevailed! What a connivance at sin existed!—What resistance to apostolic authority was set up!

To account for this, it should be recollected, that the possession of miraculous gifts by no means implied the existence and influence of sanctifying grace. Those extraordinary powers were entirely distinct from the qualities which are essential to the character of a real Christian. They were powers conferred not at all, or in a very subordinate degree, for the benefit of the individual himself, but were distributed according to the sovereignty of the Divine will, for the edification of believers and the conviction of unbelievers. Hence saith the apostle,—"Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." Our Lord has informed us, that miraculous endowments were not necessarily connected with, but were often disconnected from, personal piety. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye workers of iniquity." Paul supposes the same thing in the commencement of this chapter, where he says,—"Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge;—and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—This hypothetical mode of speech certainly implies, that gifts and grace are not necessarily connected.

This is a very awful consideration, and, by showing how far self-deception may be carried, ought to be felt as a solemn admonition to all professing Christians, to be very careful and diligent in the great business of self-examination.

It is evident, both from the nature of things, and from the reasoning of the apostle, that some of the miraculous powers were more admired, and therefore more popular, than others. The gift of tongues, as is plain from the reasoning in the fourteenth chapter, appears to have been most coveted, because eloquence was so much cultivated by the Greeks: to reason and declaim in public, as a talent, was much admired and as a practice, was exceedingly common: schools were established to teach the art, and places of public resort were frequented to display it. Hence, in the Church of Christ, and especially with those whose hearts were unsanctified by Divine grace, and who converted miraculous operations into a means of personal ambition, the gift of tongues was the most admired of all these extraordinary powers. A desire after conformity to the envied distinctions of the world, has ever been the snare and the reproach of many of the members of the Christian community.

Where distinctions exist, many evils will be sure to follow, as long as human nature is in an imperfect state. Talents, or the power of fixing attention and raising admiration, will be valued above virtues; and the more popular talents will occupy, in the estimate of ambition, a higher rank than those that are useful. Consequently, we must expect, wherever opportunities present themselves, to see on the one hand, pride, vanity, arrogance, love of display, boasting, selfishness, conscious superiority,

and a susceptibility of offence; while on the other we shall witness an equally offensive exhibition of envy, suspicion, imputation of evil, exultation over failures, and a disposition to magnify and report offences. Such passions are not entirely excluded from the Church of God, at least during its militant state; and they were most abundantly exhibited among the Christians at Corinth. Those who had gifts, were too apt to exult over those that had none; while the latter indulged in envy, and ill-will toward the former; those who were favored with the most distinguished endowments, vaunted of their achievements over those who attained only to the humbler powers; and all the train of the irascible passions was indulged to such a degree, as well nigh to banish Christian love from the fellowship of the faithful. This unhappy state of things the apostle found it necessary to correct, which he did by a series of most conclusive arguments; such, for instance, as that all these gifts are the bestowments of the Spirit, who in distributing them exercises a wise but irresponsible sovereignty—that they are bestowed for mutual advantage, and not for personal glory—that this variety is essential to general edification—that the useful ones are to be more valued than those of a dazzling nature—that they are dependent on each other for their efficiency; and he then concludes his expostulation and representation, by introducing to their notice that heavenly virtue which he so beautifully describes in the chapter under consideration, and which he exalts in value and importance above the most coveted miraculous powers. "Now, ye earnestly desire (for the words should be rendered indicatively, and not imperatively,) the best gifts, but yet I show unto you a more excellent way." "Ye are ambitious to obtain those endowments which shall cause you to be esteemed as the most honorable and distinguished persons in the Church; but, notwithstanding your high notions of the respect due to those who excel in miracles, I now point out to you a way to still greater honor, by a road open to you all, and in which your success will neither produce pride in yourselves, nor excite envy in others. FOLLOW AFTER CHARITY, for the possession and exercise of this grace is infinitely to be preferred to the most splendid gift."

Admirable encomium—exalted eulogium on Charity! What more could be said, or be said more properly, to raise it in our esteem, and to impress it upon our heart? The age of miracles is past; the signs, and the tokens, and the powers which accompanied it, and which, like brilliant lights from heaven, hung in bright effulgence over the Church, are vanished. No longer can the members or ministers of Christ confound the mighty perplex the wise, or guide the simple inquirer after truth, by the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: the control of the laws of nature, and of the spirits of darkness, is no longer intrusted to us; but that which is more excellent and more heavenly remains: that which is more valuable in itself, and less liable to abuse, continues; and that is, CHARITY. Miracles were but the credentials of Christianity, but CHARITY is its essence; miracles but its witnesses, which, having ushered it into the world, and borne their testimony, retired for ever;—but CHARITY is its very soul, which, when disencumbered of all that is earthly, shall ascend to its native seat—the paradise and the presence of the eternal God.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NATURE OF CHARITY.

In the discussion of every subject, it is of great importance to ascertain, and to fix with precision, the



meaning of the terms by which it is expressed; more especially in those cases where, as in the present instance, the principal word has acquired, by the changes of time and usages of society, more senses than one. Formerly, the English word *charity* signified good-will or benevolence: when restricted to this meaning, it was significant enough of the Greek term employed by the apostle in this chapter; but in modern times the word *charity* is often employed to signify almsgiving—a circumstance which has thrown a partial obscurity over many passages of Scripture, and has led, indeed, to the most gross perversion of Divine truth and the circulation of the most dangerous errors. That the charity which is the subject of the present treatise cannot mean almsgiving, is evident from the assertion of the apostle, where he says—"Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The meaning of the term is Love, and so it is rendered in many other passages of the New Testament; such, for instance, as the following: "Love worketh no ill to its neighbor," "The fruit of the Spirit is love," "Love is the fulfilling of the law," "Faith which worketh by love." It is the same word in all these texts, which in the present chapter and in the following passages, is rendered charity.

"The end of the commandment is charity."—"Charity covereth a multitude of sins." The employment of the term *charity*, instead of love, in the last quoted passage, is peculiarly to be regretted, as in consequence of the modern meaning attached to it, many have taken up the false and dangerous notion, that pecuniary liberality to the poor will make an atonement for human guilt; an error which could have had no countenance from Scripture, had the word been rendered as it is in other places.—"Love covereth a multitude of sins." This is not the only case in which our translators, by the capricious employment in different places of two English words for the same Greek term, have helped to confuse the English reader of the Holy Scriptures.

We shall in this treatise substitute for charity the word Love, which is a correct translation of the original. If, however, the word *charity* should be occasionally used to avoid a too frequent repetition of *love*, we beg that it may be understood as synonymous with that term.

Of what kind of love does the apostle treat? Not of love to God, as is evident from the whole chapter, for the properties which are here enumerated have no direct reference to Jehovah, but relate in every instance to man. It is a disposition founded, no doubt, upon love to God, but it is not the same.

Nor is it, as many have represented, the love of the brethren. Without all question, we are under special obligations to love those who are the children of God, and joint heirs with us in Christ. "This is my commandment," says Christ, "that ye love one another." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Our brethren in Christ should be the first and dearest objects of our regard. Love to them is the badge of discipleship—the proof, both to ourselves and to the world, that we have passed from death unto life.—And although we are "to do good to all men," yet we are especially to regard "the household of faith." But still, brotherly love, or the love of the brethren as such, is not the disposition, any otherwise than as included in it, which is here enjoined.

A far more comprehensive duty is laid down, which is LOVE TO MANKIND IN GENERAL. As a proof of this I refer to the nature of its exercises. Do they not as much respect the unconverted as the converted; the unbeliever as the believer? Are we not as much bound to be meek and kind, humble, forgiving, and patient, towards all men, as we are towards

our brethren? Or, may we be envious, passionate, proud, and revengeful, towards "those that are without," though not towards those "that are within?" We have only to consider the operations and effects of love as here described, and to recollect that they are as much required in our intercourse with the world, as with the Church, to perceive at once, that it is love to man, as such, that is the subject of this chapter. Nor is this the only place where universal philanthropy is enjoined. The apostle Peter, in his chain of graces, makes this the last link, and distinguishes it from "brotherly kindness," to which, says he, add "charity," or, as it should be rendered, "love." The disposition inculcated in this chapter is, that love which Peter commands us to add to brotherly kindness; it is, in fact, the very state of mind which is the compendium of the second table of the moral law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The temper so beautifully set forth by Paul, is a most lively, luminous and eloquent exposition of this summary of duty to our neighbor, which is given us by our Lord.

Strange, indeed, would it be, if Christianity, the most perfect system, of duty as well as of doctrine, that God ever gave to the world, should contain no injunction to cultivate a spirit of general good-will. Strange, indeed, if that system, which rises upon the earth with the smiling aspect of universal benevolence, did not breathe its own spirit into the hearts of its believers. Strange, indeed, if, while God loved the world, and Christ died for it, the world in no sense was to be an object of a Christian's regard.—Strange, indeed, if the energies, the exercises, and propensities of true piety, were to be confined within the narrow boundaries of the Church, and to be allowed no excursions into the widely extended regions that lie beyond, and have no sympathies for the countless millions by which these regions are peopled. It would have been regarded as a blank in Christianity, as a deep wide chasm, had philanthropy gained no place, or but a small one, amidst its duties; and such an omission must ever have presented a want of harmony between its doctrines and its precepts; a point of dissimilarity between the perfection of the divine, and the required completeness of the human, character. Here, then, is the disposition inculcated: a *spirit of universal love*; good-will to man; a delight in human happiness; a carefulness to avoid whatever would lessen, and to do whatever would increase, the amount of the felicity of mankind: a love that is limited to no circle; that is restricted by no partialities, no friendships, no relationships; around which neither prejudices nor aversions are allowed to draw a boundary; which realizes, as its proper objects, friends, strangers, and enemies; which requires no recommendation of any one but that he is a man, and which searches after man wherever he is to be found. It is an affection which binds its possessor to all of his kind, and makes him a good citizen of the universe.

We must possess domestic affections, to render us good members of a family; we must have the more extended principles of patriotism, to render us good members of the state; and for the same reason, we must possess universal benevolence, to render us good members of a system which comprises the whole human race. This is the generic virtue, the one simple principle out of which so many and such beautiful ramifications of holy benevolence evolve. All the actions of love, so finely described by the apostle, may be traced up to this delight in happiness; they all consist in doing that which will promote the comfort of others, or in not doing that which will hinder their peace;—whether they consist in passive or in active properties, they have a direct bearing on general well-being.

It will be proper to remark here, that by universal benevolence, we mean nothing that bears the most distant resemblance to the spurious philanthropy advocated some few years since by a school of modern infidels, who resolved all virtue into a chimerical passion for the public good; and the characteristic feature of whose system it was, to build up general benevolence on the destruction of individual tenderness. Reason and revelation unite in teaching us, that in the development of the passions we must advance from the private to public affections, and that extended benevolence is the last and most perfect fruit of individual regards.

But although we represent this love as consisting in a principle of universal benevolence, we would remark that instead of satisfying itself with mere speculations on the desirableness of the well-being of the whole, or with mere good wishes for the happiness of mankind in general; instead of that indolent sentimentalism which would convert its inability to benefit the great body into an excuse for doing good to none of its members:—it will put forth its energies, and engage its activities, for those which are within its reach: it would, if it could, touch the extreme parts; but as this cannot be done, it will exert a beneficial influence on those which are near; its very distance from the circumference will be felt as a motive to greater zeal in promoting the comfort of all that may be contiguous; and it will consider that the best and only way of reaching the last, is by an impulse given to what is next. It will view every individual it has to do with as a representative of his species, and consider him as preferring strong claims, both on his own account and on the account of his race. Towards all, it will retain a feeling of good-will, a preparedness for benevolent activity; and towards those who come within the sphere of its influence, it will go forth in the actings of kindness. Like the organ of vision, it can dilate, to comprehend, though but dimly, the whole prospect; or it can contract its view, and concentrate its attention upon each individual object that comes under its inspection. The persons with whom we daily converse and act, are those on whom our benevolence is first and most constantly to express itself, because these are the parts of the whole, which give us the opportunity of calling into exercise our universal philanthropy. But to them it is not to be confined, either in feeling or action; for, as we have opportunity, we are to do good to all men, and send abroad our beneficent regards to the great family of man.

Nor are we to confound this virtue with a mere natural amiableness of disposition. It is often our lot to witness a species of philanthropy which, like the painting or the bust, is a very near resemblance of the original; but which still is only a picture, or a statue, that wants the mysterious principle of life. From that mere good-will to man, which even unconverted persons may possess, the love described by the apostle differs in the following particulars.

1. *It is one of the fruits of regeneration.* "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Unless a man be born of the Spirit, he can do nothing that is spiritually good. We are by nature corrupt and unholy—destitute of all love to God—and till renewed by the Holy Ghost in the spirit of our mind, we can do nothing well pleasing to God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" and this love of our species is a part of the new creation. It is, in the strictest sense of the term, a *holy* virtue, and one great branch of holiness itself; for what is holiness, but love to God, and love to man? And without that previous change which is denominated being "born again," we can no more love man as we ought to do, than we can love God. Divine grace is as essentially necessary for the production and

the exercise of philanthropy, as it is for piety; and the former is no less a part of religion than the latter. Love is the Divine nature, the image of God, which is communicated to the soul of man by the renewing influence of the Holy Ghost.

2. *This love is the effect of faith:* hence it is said by the apostle, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, *but faith which worketh by love.*" And by another inspired writer, it is represented as a part of the superstructure which is raised on the basis of faith:—"Add to your faith—love." It is certain that there can be no proper regard to man, which does not result from faith in Christ. It is the belief of the truth which makes love to be felt as a duty, and which brings before the mind the great examples, the powerful motives, furnished by the Scriptures to promote its exercise. Nothing spiritually excellent can be performed without faith. It is by faith alone, that any thing we do is truly and properly religion: this is the identifying Christian principle, separate and apart from which, whatever excellence men may exhibit, is but mere morality. By faith we submit to the authority of God's law; by faith we are united to Christ, and "receive from his fulness and grace for grace;" by faith we contemplate the love of God in Christ; by faith our conduct becomes acceptable to God through Christ.

3. *This love is exercised in obedience to the authority of God's word.* It is a principle, not merely a feeling; it is cultivated and exercised as a duty, not yielded to merely as a generous instinct; it is a submission to God's command, not merely an indulgence of our own propensities; it is the constraint of conscience, not merely the impulse of constitutional tenderness. It may be, and often is, found where there is no natural softness or amiableness of temper: where this exists, it will grow with greater rapidity, and expand to greater magnitude, and flourish in greater beauty, like the mountain ash in the rich mould of the valley; but it still may be planted, like that noble tree, in a less congenial situation, and thrive, in obedience to the law of its nature, amidst barrenness and rocks. Multitudes, who have nothing of sentimentalism in their nature, have love to man; they rarely can melt into tears, or kindle into rapture—but they can be all energy and activity for the relief of misery, and for the promotion of human happiness: their temperament of mind partakes more of the frigid than of the torrid, and their summer seasons of the soul are short and cold; but still, amidst their mild and even lovely winter, charity, like the rose of Pæstum, blooms in fragrance and in beauty. This is their motto—"God has commanded me to love my neighbor as myself; and in obedience to him I restrain my natural tendency, and forgive the injuries, and relieve the miseries, and build up the comfort, and hide the faults, of all around me."

4. *It is founded upon, and grows out of love to God.* We are to love God for his own sake, and men for God's sake. Our Lord has laid down this as the order and rule of our affections. We must first love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and then our neighbor as ourselves. Now, there can be no proper religious affection for our neighbor, which does not spring out of supreme regard for Jehovah; since our love to our neighbor must respect him as the offspring and workmanship of God: "and if we love not him that begat, how can we love him that is begotten of him?" Besides, as we are to exercise this disposition in obedience to the authority of God, and as no obedience to his authority can be valuable in itself, or acceptable to him, which is not an operation of love, no kindness to our neighbor can come up to the nature of the duty here enjoined, which does not arise out of a



proper state of heart towards God. We love any thing more truly and properly, the more explicitly we acknowledge and love God in it; upon the view of those strokes and lineaments of the divine beauty, and the characters of his glory, which are discernible in all his creatures, our love should someway be commensurate with the occasion, and comprehend the universe in its large and complacential embraces. Though, as any thing is of higher excellency, and hath more lively touches and resemblances of God upon it, or, by the disposition of his providence and law more nearly approaches us, and is more immediately presented to our notice, converse, use, or engagement; so our love should be towards it more explicitly, in a higher degree, or with more frequency. As man, therefore, hath in him more of divine resemblance of God's natural likeness and image—good men, of his moral holy image—we ought to love men more than the inferior creatures, and those that are good and holy more than other men; and those with whom we are more concerned, with a more definite love, and which is required to be more frequent in its exercise: but all from the attraction of somewhat divine appearing in the object. So that all rational love, or that is capable of being regulated and measured by a law, is only so far right in its own kind, as we love God in every thing, and every thing upon his account, and for his sake.—The nature and spirit of man is, by the apostasy, become disaffected and strange to God—alienated from the divine life—addicted to a particular limited good, to the creature for itself, apart from God; whereupon the things men love are their idols, and men's love is idolatry. But when, by regeneration, a due propension towards God is restored, the universal good draws their minds; they become inclined and enlarged towards it; and, as that is diffused, their love follows it, and flows towards it every where. They love all things principally in and for God; and therefore such men most, as excel in goodness, and in whom the Divine image more brightly shines.\*

Let us, then, remember that the beautiful superstructure of philanthropy, which the apostle has raised in this chapter, has for its foundation a supreme regard for the great and blessed God. The utmost kindness and sympathy; the most tender compassion, united with the most munificent liberality; if it do not rest on the love of God, is not the temper here set forth—is not the grace which has the principle of immortality in its nature, and which will live and flourish in eternity, when faith and hope shall cease. Human excellence, however distinguished, whatever good it may diffuse upon others, or whatever glory it may draw around itself, if it be not sanctified and supported by this holy principle, is corruptible and mortal, and cannot dwell in the presence of God, nor exist amidst the glories of eternity; but is only the flower of the grass which shall wither away in the rebuke of the Almighty. For want of this vital and essential principle of all true religion, how much of amiable compassion, and of tender attention to the woes of humanity—how much of kindly feeling and active benevolence,—is daily expended, which, while it yields its amiable though unrenewed professor much honor and delight, has not the weight of a feather in the scales of his eternal destiny.

5. *This disposition is cherished in our heart by a sense of God's love in Christ Jesus to us.*

There is this peculiarity in the morality of the New Testament;—it is not only enforced by the consideration of Divine power, but by a distinct and repeated reference to Divine goodness. Not

that any motive is absolutely necessary to make a command binding upon our conscience, beyond God's right to issue it; the obligation to duty is complete, in the absence of every other consideration than the rightful authority of the command; but as man is a creature capable of being moved by appeals to his gratitude, as well as by motives addressed to his fear, it is both wise and condescending, on the part of Jehovah, thus to deal with him, and to "make him willing in the day of his power." He thus not only drives us by the force of his terrors, but draws us by the cords of his love.

The great evangelical inducement to mutual affection between man and man, is God's love in Christ Jesus to us. God has commended and manifested his love to us in a manner that will fill immensity and eternity with astonishment: He has "so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This stupendous exhibition of divine mercy is presented by the sacred writers, not only as a source of strong consolation, but also as a powerful motive to action; we are not only to contemplate it for the purpose of joy, but also of imitation. Mark the beautiful reasoning of the apostle John—"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Similar to this is also the inference of Paul—"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers (imitators) of God, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ who hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor." How forcible, yet how tender is such language! there is a charm in such a motive, which no terms can describe. The love of God, then, in its existence and arrangements from eternity; in its manifestation in time by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; in its topless height, its fathomless depth, its measureless length and breadth;—is the grand inducement to universal affection: and is it not enough to soften a heart of stone—to melt a heart of ice? The love spoken of in the chapter under consideration, is that impulse towards our fellow-men which is given us by the cross of Christ: it is not mere natural kindness, but it is love for Christ's sake; it is not the mere operations of a generous temper, but it is the feeling which moved in the apostle's breast, when he exclaimed, "The love of Christ constraineth us;" it is not natural religion, but Christianity; it is, so to speak, a plant which grows on Calvary, and entwines itself for support around the cross. It is a disposition which argues in this way: "Has God indeed thus loved me, so as to give his Son for my salvation? and is he kind to me daily for the sake of Christ? Has he forgiven all my numberless and aggravated transgressions? Does he still, with infinite patience, bear with all my infirmities and provocations? Then what is there, in the way of most generous affection, I ought not to be willing to do, or to bear, or to sacrifice, for others? Do they offend me, let me bear with them, and forgive them; for how has God borne with me, and blotted out my sins? Do they want, let me be forward to supply their necessities; for how has God supplied mine?" Here, then, is love—that deep sense of God's love to us, which shows us the necessity, the reasonableness, the duty, of being kind to others; the feeling of a heart, which, laboring under the weight of its obligations to God, and finding itself too poor to extend its goodness to him, looks round, and gives utterance to its exuberant gratitude in acts of kindness to man.

\* How on Charity in Reference to other Men's Sins.

6. *It is that good-will to man which, while its proximate end is the welfare of our fellow-creatures, is ultimately directed to the glory of God.*

It is the sublime characteristic of every truly Christian virtue, that whatever inferior ends it may seek, and through whatever intervening medium it may pass, it is directed ultimately to the praise of Jehovah: it may put forth its excellences before the admiring eyes of mortals, and exert its energies for their happiness; but neither to attract their applause, nor to build up their interests, must be its highest aim. The rule of our conduct, as to its chief end, is thus explicitly and comprehensively laid down: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—This is not mere advice, but a command—and it is a command extending to all our conduct. To glorify God is to act so as that his authority shall be recognized and upheld by us in the world; it is to be seen submitting to his will, and behaving so as that his word and ways shall be better thought of in the world. Our actions must appear to have a reference to God; and without this, they cannot partake of the character of religion, however excellent and beneficial they may seem.

But perhaps this disposition of mind will be best illustrated by exhibiting an example of it; and where shall we find one suited to our purpose? Every mind will perhaps immediately revert to Him who was love incarnate; and we might indeed point to every action of his benevolent career as a display of the purest philanthropy: but as his example was hereafter to be considered, we shall now select one from men of like passions with ourselves; but we must go for it to "the chamber where the good man meets his fate," rather than to the resorts of the healthy and the active; for it seems as if the brightest beauties of this love were reserved, like those of the setting sun, for the eve of its departure to another hemisphere. How often have we beheld the dying Christian, who, during long and mortal sickness, has exhibited, as he stood on the verge of heaven, something of the spirit of a glorified immortal. The natural infirmities of temper, which attended him through life, and which sometimes dimmed the lustre of his piety, disquieted his own peace, and lessened the pleasure of his friends, had all departed, or had sunk into the shade of those holy graces which then stood out in bold and commanding relief upon his soul. The beams of heaven now falling upon his spirit were reflected, not only in the faith that is the confidence of things not seen—not only in the hope which entereth within the veil,—but in the love which is the greatest in the trinity of Christian virtues. How lowly in the heart did he seem—how entirely clothed with humility! Instead of being puffed up with any thing of his own, or uttering a single boasting expression, it was like a wound in his heart to hear any one remind him either of his good deeds or dispositions; and he appeared in his own eyes less than ever, while, like his emblem, the setting sun, he expanded every moment into greater magnitude in the view of every spectator. Instead of envying the possessions or the excellences of other men, it was a cordial to his departing spirit that he was leaving them thus distinguished: how kind was he to his friends!—and as for his enemies, he had none; enmity had died in his heart, he forgave all that was manifestly evil, and kindly interpreted all that was only equivocally so. Nothing lived in his recollection, as to the conduct of others, but their acts of kindness. When infirmity reached his ear of the misconduct of those who had been his adversaries, he grieved in spirit, even as he rejoiced when told of their coming back to public esteem by

deeds of excellence. His very opinions seemed under the influence of his love; and, as he wished well, he believed well, or hoped well, of many of whom he had formerly thought evil. His meekness and patience were touching, his kindness indescribable; the trouble he gave, and the favors he received, drew tears from his own eyes, and were acknowledged in expressions that drew tears from all around. There was an ineffable tenderness in his looks, and his words were the very accents of benignity. He lay a pattern of all the passive virtues; and having thus thrown off much that was of the earth, earthy, and put on charity as a garment, and dressed himself for heaven, in his antechamber, his sick room, he departed to be with Christ, and to be for ever perfect in Love.

There was a man in whom this was realized, and some extracts from his invaluable Memoir, will prove it; I mean Mr. Scott, the author of the Commentary.

"His mind," says his biographer, "dwelt much upon love: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Faith worketh by love. He seemed full of tenderness and affection to all around him. 'One evidence,' he said, 'I have of meekness for heaven: I feel much love to all mankind—to every man upon earth—to those who have most opposed and slandered me.' To his servant he said, 'I thank you for all your kindness to me. If at any time I have been hasty and short, forgive me, and pray to God to forgive me; but lay the blame upon me, not upon religion.'

"His tender affection for us all is astonishing in such a state of extreme suffering, and cuts us to the heart. He begged his curate to forgive him, if he had been occasionally rough and sharp. 'I meant it for your good, but, like every thing of mine, it was mixed with sin; impute it not, however, to my religion, but to my want of religion.' He is so gentle and loving—it is so delightful to attend upon him,—that his servants, finding themselves in danger of contention which should wait upon him, agreed to take it by turns, that each might have her due share of the pleasure and benefit; and yet he is continually begging our forgiveness for his want of patience and thankfulness. His kindness and affection to all who approached him were carried to the greatest height, and showed themselves in a singularly minute attention to all their feelings, and, whatever might be for their comfort, to a degree that was quite affecting—especially when he was suffering so much himself, often in mind as well as body. There was an astonishing absence of selfish feelings: even in his worst hours he thought of the health of us all; observed if we sat up long, and insisted on our retiring; and was much afraid of paining or hurting us in any way. Mr. D. said something on the permanency of his Commentary; 'Ah!' he cried, with a semi-contemptuous smile; and added, 'you know not what a proud heart I have, and how you help the Devil.' He proceeded: 'There is one feeling I cannot have, if I would: those that have opposed my doctrine, have slandered me sadly; but I cannot feel any resentment; I can only love and pity them, and pray for their salvation. I never did feel any resentment towards them; I only regret that I did not more ardently long and pray for their salvation.'—This is love, and how lovely is it?"

Can we conceive of a more beautiful exemplification of the virtue I am describing? and this is the temper we ought all to seek. This is the grace, blended with all our living habits, diffused through all our conduct, forming our character, breathing in our desires, speaking in our words, beaming in



our eyes; in short, a living part of our living selves. And *this*, be it remembered, is religion—practical religion.

### CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IS NOT TO BE CONFOUNDED WITH THAT SPURIOUS CANDOR WHICH CONSISTS IN INDIFFERENCE TO RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT, OR IN CONNIVANCE AT SINFUL PRACTICES.

A SEPARATE and entire section is devoted to this distinction of love from a counterfeit resemblance of it, because of the importance of the subject, and the frequency with which the mistake is made of confounding things which are so different from each other. No terms have been more misunderstood or abused than candor and charity. Some have found in them an act of toleration for all religious opinions, however opposed to one another or to the word of God, and a bull of indulgences for all sinful practices which do not transgress the laws of our country: so that, by the aid of these two words, all truth and holiness may be driven out of the world; for if error be innocent, truth must be unimportant; and if we are to be indulgent towards the sins of others, under the sanction and by the command of Scripture, holiness can be of no consequence either to them or ourselves.

If we were to hearken to some, we should conceive of Charity, not as she really is—a spirit of ineffable beauty, descending from heaven upon our distracted earth, holding in her hand the torch of truth, which she had lighted at the fountain of celestial radiance, and clad in a vest of unsullied purity; and who, as she entered upon the scene of discord, proclaimed “glory to God in the highest,” as well as “peace on earth, good-will to men;” and having with these magic words healed the troubled waters of strife, proceeding to draw men closer to each other, by drawing them closer to Christ, the common centre of believers; and then hushing the clamors of contention, by removing the pride, the ignorance, and the depravity, which produced them.\* No; but we should think of her as a lying spirit—clad, indeed, in some of the attire of an angel of light, but bearing no heavenly impress, holding no torch of truth, wearing no robe of holiness; smiling, perhaps, but like a sycophant, upon all without distinction; calling upon men, as they are combating for truth and striving against sin, to sheathe their swords and cast away their shields, to be indulgent towards each other’s vices and tolerant of each other’s errors; because they all mean and feel so substantially alike, though they have different modes of expressing their opinions and of giving utterance to their feelings. Is this charity?—No: it is Satan in the habiliments of Gabriel.

\* An anonymous American writer has given the following eloquent description.

“Her thrones seemed ivory, and over her white robes floated an azure mantle besprinkled with drops of heavenly lustre. On her head was a chaplet of such flowers as spring in the regions of bliss; and the summit of the diadem, was distinguished by a centre of rays that resembled the morning star. The bloom of eternal youth was in her countenance, but her majestic form can only be described in the language of that world where she is fully known. In her right hand was “the Sword of the Spirit,” and at her side the symbols of power and majesty. Beneath her feet the clouds were condensed in awful darkness, and her chariot was borne along by the breath of the Almighty.”

That there is much of this spurious candor in the world, and that it is advocated by great names, will appear by the following quotation from Dr. Priestley:—“If we could be so happy, as to believe that there are no errors but what men may be so circumstanced as to be *innocently* betrayed into; that *any* mistake of the head is very consistent with rectitude of heart; and that all differences in modes of worship may be only the different methods by which different men, who are equally the offspring of God, are endeavoring to honor and obey their common parent;—our difference of opinion would have no tendency to lessen our mutual love and esteem.” Dr. Priestley, and the followers of his religious system, are not peculiar in this sentiment. Pope’s Universal Prayer is to the same effect.

“Father of all, in every age,  
In every clime adored,  
By saint, by savage, or by sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.”

The well-known metrical adage of this poet is adapted, to the full extent of its spirit and design, by great multitudes who suppose that they are quite orthodox both in opinion and practice, and who perhaps boast of their charity, while they exclaim—

“For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight;  
His can’t be wrong, whose life is in the right.”

It is, I imagine, generally thought, by at least a great part of mankind, that it is of little consequence what a man’s religious opinions are, provided his conduct be tolerably correct; that charity requires us to think well of his state; and that it is the very essence of bigotry to question the validity of his claim to the character of a Christian, or to doubt of the safety of his soul; in other words, it is pretended that benevolence requires us to think well of men, irrespective of religious opinions; and that it is almost a violation of the rule of love to attempt to unsettle their convictions, or to render them uneasy in the possession of their sentiments, although we may conclude them to be fundamentally wrong. But does this disregard of all opinions—at least, this disposition to think well of persons as to their religious character, and the safety of their souls, whatever may be the doctrines they hold,—enter essentially into the nature of love? Most certainly not; but actually opposes it. Benevolence is good-will to men, but this is a very different thing from a good opinion of their principles and practices; so different, that the former may not only exist in all its force without the latter, but be actually incompatible with it; for if I believe that a man holds opinions that endanger his safety, benevolence requires, not that I should shut my eyes to his danger, and lull him into false confidence, but that I should bear my testimony and express my fears concerning his situation. Benevolence is a very different thing from complacency or esteem. These are founded on approbation of character; the other is nothing more than a desire to promote happiness.

The question, whether love is to be confounded with indifference to religious principle,—for such does the spurious candor I am contending against amount to,—is best decided by an appeal to Scripture. “Ye shall know the truth,” said Christ; “and the truth shall make you free.” “This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” With what emphasis did the apostle speak of the conduct of those who attempted to pervert the great doctrine



of justification by faith, by introducing the obsolete ceremonies of the Jewish law. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Now, certainly, this is any thing but indifference to religious opinion; for, be it observed, it was matter of opinion, and not the duties of morality, or of practical religion, that was here so strenuously opposed. The apostle commands Timothy "To hold fast the form of sound words; and to give himself to doctrine." The apostle John has this strong language:—"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine, of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Jude commands us to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." From these, and many other passages which might be quoted, it is evident, not only that truth is important and necessary to salvation, but that error is guilty, and in many instances is connected with the loss of the soul. "If a man may disbelieve one truth, and yet be free from sin for so doing, he may disbelieve two; and if two, four; and if four, ten; and if ten, half the Bible; and if half the Bible, the whole; and if he may be a Deist, and yet be in a safe state; he may be an Athiest and still go to heaven." To such awful lengths may the principle be pushed, that there is no guilt in mental error. "Let those," says Dr. Priestley, "who maintain that the mere holding of opinions (without regard to the motives and state of the mind through which men may have been led to form them,) will necessarily exclude them from the favor of God, be particularly careful with respect to the premises from which they draw so alarming a conclusion." Nothing can be more sophistical than this passage; for we do not in maintaining the guiltiness of a false opinion, leave out the state of the heart; but contend that all errors in the judgment have their origin in the depravity of our nature, and, in so far as they prevail, discover a heart not brought into subjection to Christ. A perfectly holy mind could not err in the opinion it derived from the word of God: and it may be most fairly presumed that there are certain fundamental truths, which cannot be rejected, without such a degree of depravity of heart, as is utterly incompatible with true piety towards God.

It is to be recollected, that the holiness required in the word of God, is a very superior thing to what is called morality. Holiness is a right state of mind towards God, and it is enforced by motives drawn from the view which the Scriptures give us of the Divine nature, and of the Divine conduct towards us. If our views of God, and of his scheme of mercy, be incorrect, the motives which influence us cannot be correct. Hence all right feeling and conduct are traced up by the sacred writers to the truth. Do they speak of regeneration? they tell us we are "begotten by the incorruptible seed of the word." Do they speak of sanctification? they ascribe it, so far as instrumentality is concerned, to the truth; and the truth itself is characterized as a "doctrine according to godliness." It is evident, that without the truth, or in other words, without right opinions, we can neither be born again of the Spirit, nor partake of true holiness. The whole process of practical and experimental religion is carried on by the instrumentality of right sentiments; and to suppose that holiness could be pro-

duced in the soul as well by error as by truth, is not only contrary to revelation, but no less contrary to reason. If truth sanctify, error must in some way or other pollute; for to suppose that two causes, not only so distinct but so opposite, can produce the same effect, is absurd; and the Scriptures every where insist upon the importance of the truth, not merely on its own account, but on account of its moral effect upon the soul.

If this view of the subject be correct, Christian charity cannot mean indifference to religious sentiment; for if so, it would be a temper of mind in direct opposition to a large portion of Scripture: nor are we required, by this virtue, to give the least countenance to what we think is error. We may, indeed, be called bigots; for this term in the lips of many, means nothing more than a reproach for attaching importance to right sentiments. No word has been more misunderstood than this. If by bigotry is meant such an overweening attachment to our opinions, as makes us refuse to listen to argument; such a blind regard to our own views, as closes the avenues of conviction; such a selfish zeal for our creed, as actually destroys benevolence, and causes us to hate those who differ from us;—it is an evil state of mind, manifestly at variance with love: but if, as is generally the case, it means, by those who use it, only zeal for truth, it is perfectly consistent with love, and actually a part of it; for "charity rejoiceth in the truth." It is quite compatible with good will to men, therefore, to attach high importance to doctrines, to condemn error, to deny the Christianity and safety of those who withhold their assent from fundamental truths, and to abstain from all such religious communion with them as would imply, in the least possible degree, any thing like indifference to opinion. It does appear to me, that the most perfect benevolence to men, is that which, instead of looking with complacency on their errors, warns them of their danger, and admonishes them to escape. It is no matter that they think they are in the right—this only makes their case the more alarming; and to act towards them as if we thought their mistaken views of no consequence, is only to confirm their delusion, and to aid their destruction.

It is true we are neither to despise them nor persecute them; we are neither to oppress nor ridicule them; we are neither to look upon them with haughty scorn, nor with callous indifference;—but while we set ourselves against their errors, we are to pity them with unaffected compassion, and to labor for their conversion with disinterested kindness. We are to bear, with unruffled meekness, all their provoking sarcasms; and to sustain, with deep humility, the consciousness of our clearer perceptions; and to convince them that, with the steadiest resistance of their principles, we unite the tenderest concern for their persons.

And, if charity do not imply indifference to religious opinions, so neither does it mean *connivance at sin*. There are some persons whose views of the evil of sin are so dim and contracted, or their good nature is so accommodating and unscriptural, that they make all kinds of excuses for men's transgressions, and allow of any latitude that is asked, for human frailty. The greatest sins, if they are not committed against the laws of society, are reduced to the mere infirmities of our fallen nature, which should not be visited with harsh censure; and as for the lesser ones, they are mere specks upon a bright and polished surface, which nothing but a most fastidious precision would ever notice. Such persons condemn, as sour and rigid ascetics, all who oppose and condemn iniquity; revile them as unkind in a kind of malignant opposition to the cheerfulness of society, the very dregs of puritan

ism and barbarism; and reproach them as being destitute of all the charities and courtesies of life. But if candor be a confounding of the distinctions between sin and holiness, a depreciating of the excellence of the latter, and at the same time a diminishing of the evil of the former; if it necessarily lead us to connive with an easy and good natured air at iniquity, and to smile with a kind and gentle aspect upon the transgressions which we witness;—then it must be something openly at variance with the letter and the spirit of revelation: and surely that candor which runs counter to the mind of God, cannot be the love on which St. Paul passes such an eulogium in this chapter. We are told by the word of God, that sin is exceedingly sinful: that it is the abominable thing which God hates; that the wages of it are death; that by an unholiness *feeling* we violate the law: we are commanded to abstain from its very appearance; we are warned against excusing it in ourselves, or in each other; we are admonished to reprove it, to resist it, and to oppose it, to the uttermost. Certainly, then, it cannot be required by the law of love, that we should look with a mild and tolerant eye on sin. Love to man arises out of Love to God; but can it be possible to love God, and not to hate sin? it is the fruit of faith, but faith purifies the heart; it is cherished by a sense of redeeming love; but the very end of the scheme of redemption is the destruction of sin. Indulgence of men in their sins, connivance at their iniquity, instead of being an act of benevolence, is the greatest cruelty: hence the emphatic language of God to the Israelites—"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Would it be benevolence to connive at that conduct by which any individual was bringing disease upon his body, or poverty into his circumstances? If not, how can it be benevolent to leave him, without a warning, to do that which will involve his soul in ruin. To think more lightly of the evil of sin than the word of God does; to call that good, or even indifferent, which by it is called evil; to make allowances which it does not make, for human frailty; to frame excuses for sin which it disallows; to lull the consciences of men, by considerations in extenuation of guilt which it forbids; or to do any thing to produce other views and feelings in reference to iniquity, than such as are warranted by the Scripture,—is not charity, but a participation in other men's sins.

It is the nature of charity, I admit, not to be hasty to impute evil motives to actions of a doubtful nature: not to take pleasure in finding out the faults of others; not to magnify them beyond the reality, but to make all the allowance that a regard to truth will admit of; to hope the best in the absence of proof; and to be willing to forgive the offence when it has been committed against ourselves; but to carry it beyond this, and let it degenerate into a complaisance which is afraid to rebuke, or oppose, or condemn sin, lest we should offend the transgressor, or violate the law of courtesy, or subject ourselves to the reproach of being a censorious bigot; which courts the good-will and promotes the self-satisfaction of others, by conniving at their sins; which seeks to ingratiate itself in their affections, by being indulgent to their vices; is to violate at once the law both of the first and of the second Table; is to forget every obligation which we are laid under, both to love God and our neighbor. If this be candor, it is no less opposed to piety than to humanity, and can never be the love enjoined in so many places in the New Testament. No, Christian charity is not a poor old dotard, creeping about the world, too blind to perceive the distinction between good and evil; or a fawning sycophant, too timid to reprove the

bold transgressor, and smiling with parasitical and imbecile complacency upon the errors and iniquities of the human race;—but a vigorous and healthy virtue, with an eye keen to discern the boundaries between right and wrong, a hand strong and ready to help the transgressor out of his miserable condition, a heart full of mercy for the sinner and the sufferer; a disposition to forgive rather than to revenge, to extenuate rather than to aggravate, to conceal rather than to expose, to be kind rather than severe, to be hopeful of good rather than suspicious of evil,—but withal, the inflexible, immutable friend of holiness, and the equally inflexible and immutable enemy of sin.

We are not allowed, it is true, to be scornful and proud towards the wicked, nor censorious towards any; we are not to make the most distant approach to the temper which says, "Stand by, I am holier than thou!" we are not to hunt for the failings of others, nor, when we see them without hunting for them, to condemn them in a tone of arrogance, or with a spirit of acerbity; but still we must maintain that temper which, while it reflects the beauty of a God of Love, no less brightly reflects his glory as a God of holiness, and a God of truth.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

A DISTINCTION has been introduced into the subject of religion, which, although not wholly free from objection, is sufficient to answer the purpose for which it is employed; I mean that which exists between essentials and non-essentials. It would be a difficult task to trace the boundary line by which these classes are divided; but the truth of the general idea cannot be questioned—that there are some things, both in faith and practice, which, for want of perceiving the grounds of their obligations, we may neglect, and yet not be destitute of true religion; while there are others, the absence of which necessarily implies an unrenewed heart. Among the essentials of true piety, must be reckoned the disposition we are now considering. It is not to be classed with those observances and views, which, though important, are not absolutely essential to salvation: we must possess it, or we are not Christians now, and shall not be admitted into heaven hereafter. The apostle has expressed this necessity in the clearest and the strongest manner. He has put a hypothetical case of the most impressive kind, which I shall now illustrate.

*"Though I speak with the tongues of men or of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."*—Verse 1.

By the tongues of men and of angels, we are not to understand the powers of the loftiest eloquence, but the miraculous gift of tongues, accompanied by an ability to convey ideas according to the method of celestial beings. Should a man be invested with these stupendous endowments, and employ them in the service of the gospel; still, if his heart were not a partaker of love, he would be no more acceptable to God, than was the clangor of the brazen instruments employed in the idolatrous worship of the Egyptian Isis, or the noise of the tinkling cymbals which accompanied the orgies of the Grecian Cybele. Such a man's profession of religion is not only *worthless* in the sight of God, but disagreeable and disgusting. The comparison is remarkably strong, inasmuch as it refers not to soft melodious sounds, as of the flute or of the harp—not to the harmonious chords of a concert—but to the harsh dissonance of instruments of the most inharmonious character:



and if, as is probable, the allusion be to the noisy clank of idolatrous musicians, the idea is as strongly presented as it is possible for the force of language to express it.

*"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not CHARITY, I am nothing."*—Verse 2.

Paul still alludes to miraculous endowments.—Prophecy, in the Scripture use of the term, is not limited to the foretelling of future events, but means, to speak by inspiration of God; and its exercise, in this instance, refers to the power of explaining, without premeditation or mistake, the typical and predictive parts of the Old Testament dispensation, together with the facts and doctrines of the Christian economy. "The faith that could remove mountains," is an allusion to an expression of our Lord's, which occurs in the gospel history. "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." This faith is of a distinct nature altogether from that by which men are justified, and become the children of God. It has been called the faith of miracles, and seems to have consisted in a firm persuasion of the power or ability of God to do any miraculous thing for the support of the gospel. It operated two ways: the first was a belief on the part of the person who wrought the miracle, that he was the subject of a divine impulse, and called at that time to perform such an act; and the other was a belief on the part of the person on whom a miracle was about to be performed, that such an effect would be really produced. Now the apostle declared, that although a man had been gifted with prophecy, so as to explain the deepest mysteries of the Jewish or the Christian systems, and in addition, possessed that miraculous faith by which the most difficult and astonishing changes would have been effected, he was nothing, and less than nothing, without love.

*"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not CHARITY, it profiteth me nothing."*—Verse 3.

This representation of the indispensable necessity of love is most striking; it supposes it possible that a man may distribute all his substance in acts of apparent beneficence, and yet, after all, be without true religion. Actions derive their moral character from the motives under the influence of which they are performed; and many which are beneficial to man, may still be sinful in the sight of God, because they are not done from a right inducement. The most diffusive liberality, if prompted by pride, vanity, or self-righteousness, is of no value in the eyes of the omniscient Jehovah: on the contrary, it is very sinful. And is it not too evident to be questioned, that many of the alms-deeds of which we are the witnesses, are done from any motives but the right ones? We can readily imagine that multitudes are lavish in their pecuniary contributions, who are at the same time totally destitute of love to God and love to man; and if destitute of these sacred virtues, they are, as it respects real religion, less than nothing, although they should spend every farthing of their property in relieving the wants of the poor. If our munificence, however great or self-denying, be the operation of mere selfish regard to ourselves, to our own reputation, or to our own safety, and not of pure love, it may do good to others, but will do none to ourselves. "And though I give my body to be burned," *i. e.* as a martyr for religion, "and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Whether such a case as this ever existed, we know not; it is not impossible, nor improbable; but if it did, not the tortures of an agonizing death,

nor the courage that endured them, nor the seeming zeal for religion which led to them, would be accepted in lieu of love to man. Such an instance of self-devotedness must have been the result either of that self-righteousness which substitutes its own sufferings for those of Christ, or of that love of fame which scruples not to seek it even in the fires of martyrdom;—in either case it partakes not of the nature, nor will it receive the reward, of true religion. It will help to convince us, not only of the necessity, but of the importance, of this temper of mind, if we bring into a narrow compass the many and various representations of it which are to be found in the New Testament.

1. *It is the object of the divine decree in predestination.* "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."—Ephes. i. 4.

2. *It is the end and purpose of the moral law.* "The end of the commandment is charity (love)." "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. xxii. 37–40. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law."

3. *It is the evidence of regeneration.* "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God."—1 John iv. 7.

4. *It is the necessary operation and effect of saving faith.* "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

5. *It is that grace by which both personal and mutual edification is promoted.* "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity (love) edifieth." 1 Cor. vii. 1. "Maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." Eph. iv. 16.

6. *It is the proof of a mutual inhabitation between God and his people.* "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 12–16.

7. *It is declared to be the greatest of all the Christian virtues.* "The greatest of these is charity (love)."

8. *It is represented as the perfection of religion.* "Above all these things, put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness." Col. iii. 4.

What encomiums are these! what striking proofs of the supreme importance of the disposition now under consideration! Who has not been guilty of some neglect of it? Who has not had his attention drawn too much from it? Who can read these passages of Holy Writ, and not feel convinced that not only mankind in general, but the professors of spiritual religion also, have too much mistaken the nature of true piety? What are clear and orthodox views—what are strong feelings—what is our faith—what our enjoyment—what our freedom from gross immorality—without this spirit of pure and universal benevolence?

Whether an instance, we again repeat, ever existed of an individual whose circumstances answered to the supposition of the apostle, we cannot determine; the statement certainly suggests to us a most alarming idea of our liability to self-deception in reference to our personal religion. Delusion on this subject prevails to an extent truly appalling. Millions are in error as to the real condition of their souls, and are travelling to perdition, while

according to their own idea, they are journeying to the celestial Canaan. Oh fearful mistake! Oh fatal imposture! What terrible disappointment awaits them! What horror, and anguish, and despair, will take eternal possession of their souls, in that moment of revelation, when, instead of awaking from the sleep of death amidst the glories of the heavenly city, they shall lift up their eyes, "being in torment." No pen can describe the overwhelming anguish of such a disappointment, and the imagination shrinks with amazement and torture from the contemplation of her own faint sketch of the insupportable scene.

To be led on by the power of delusion, so far as to commit an error of consequence to our *temporal* interests: to have impaired our health, our reputation, or our property; is sufficiently painful, especially where there is no prospect, or but a faint one, of repairing the mischief: yet, in this case, religion opens a balm for the wounded spirit, and eternity presents a prospect, where the sorrows of time will be forgotten. But, oh! to be in error on the nature of religion itself, and to build our hopes of immortality on the sand instead of the rock; to see the lamp of our deceitful profession which has served to amuse us in life, and even to guide us in false peace through the dark valley of the shadow of death, suddenly extinguished as we cross the threshold of eternity, and leaving us amidst the darkness of rayless, endless night, instead of quietly expiring amidst the blaze of everlasting day! Is such a delusion possible? Has it ever happened in *one* solitary instance? Do the annals of the unseen world record one such case, and the prison of lost souls contain one miserable spirit that perished by delusion? Then what deep solicitude ought the possibility of such an event to circulate through the hearts of all, to avoid the error of a self-deceived mind? Is it possible to be mistaken in our judgment of our state?—then how deeply anxious ought we all to feel, not to be misled by false criteria in forming our decision. But what if, instead of *one* case, millions should have occurred, of souls irrecoverably lost by self-deception? What if delusion should be the most crowded avenue to the bottomless pit? What if it should be the common infatuation, the epidemic blindness, which has fallen upon the multitudes of the inhabitants of Christendom? What if this moral insanity should have infected and destroyed very many who have made even a stricter profession of religion than others? How shall we explain, much more justify, that want of anxiety about their everlasting welfare—that destitution of care to examine into the nature and evidences of true piety—that willingness to be imposed upon, in reference to eternity—which many exhibit? Jesus Christ *does* tell us that *MANY*, in that day, shall say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name?" to whom he will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity." He says, that "*MANY* are called, but few chosen." He says, that of the four classes of those who hear the word, only *one* hears it to advantage. He says, that of the ten virgins, to whom he likens the kingdom of heaven, *five* only were wise, while the other five were deceiving themselves with the unfed lamp of a deceitful profession. He intimates most plainly, that self-deception in religion is fearfully common—and common amongst those who make a more serious profession than others. It is *he* that has sounded the alarm to awaken slumbering professors of religion from their carnal security. It is *he* that hath said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—"I know thy works, how that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." How careful, then, ought we to be, not to be imposed upon by false evidences of religion, and not to conclude that

we are Christians, while we are destitute of those things which the word of God declares to be essential to genuine piety. We must have love therefore, or all else is insufficient.

1. Some conclude, that because *they are regular in their attendance upon the services of religion*, they are true Christians: they go punctually to church or to meeting—they receive the Lord's Supper—they frequent the meetings for social prayer—they, perhaps, repeat prayers in secret, and read the Scriptures. All this is well, if it be done with right views, and in connection with right dispositions: but it is the whole of their religion; a mere abstraction of devotional exercise; a thing separate and apart from the heart, and temper, and conduct; a business of the closet, and of the sanctuary; a sort of composition paid to the Almighty, to be released from all the other demands of Scripture and obligations of piety; an expression of their willingness to be devout in the church, and on the Sabbath, provided they may be as earthly-minded, as selfish, as malicious, and as unkind, as they please, in all places and all times besides. *This is not religion.*

2. Others are depending upon the clearness of *their views, and their attainments in evangelical knowledge*. They pretend to a singular zeal for the truth, and are great sticklers for the doctrines of grace, of which they profess to have an acquaintance little short of inspiration. They look upon all, besides a few of their own class, as mere babes in knowledge, or as individuals who, like the man in the gospel, have their eyes only half opened, and who see "men as trees walking." They are the eagles who soar to the sun, and bask in his beams; while the rest of mankind are the moles that burrow, and the bats that flutter in the dark. Doctrine is every thing; clear views of the gospel are the great desideratum; and in their zeal for these things they suppose they can never say things extravagant enough, nor absurd enough, nor angry enough, against good works, practical religion, or Christian temper. Puffed up with pride, selfish, unkind, irritable, censorious, malicious—they manifest a total want of that humility and kindness which are the prominent features of true Christianity. Clear views, even where they have no resemblance to the monstrous caricatures and frightful deformities of modern antinomianism, are of themselves no evidence of religion, any more than right theoretical notions of the constitution are the proofs of loyalty; and as a man, with these notions in his mind, may be a traitor in his heart, so may a professor of religion be an enemy to God in his soul, with an evangelical creed upon his tongue. Many profess to be very fond of the lamp of truth, grasp it firmly in their hands, admit its flame, pity or blame those who are following the delusive and meteoric fires of error; but, after all, make no other use of it, than to illuminate the path that leads them to perdition: their religion begins and ends in adopting a form of sound words for their creed, approving an evangelical ministry, admiring the popular champions of the truth, and joining in the reprobation of fundamental error. As to any spirituality of mind, any heavenliness of affection, any Christian love—in short, as to any of the natural tendency, the appropriate energy, the vital elevating influence, of those very doctrines to which they profess to be attached—they are as destitute as the veriest worldling; and, like him, are perhaps selfish, revengeful, implacable, and unkind. This is a religion but too common in the present day, when evangelical sentiments are becoming increasingly popular; a religion but too common in our churches; a religion, cold, heartless, and unimportant; a sort of lunar light which reflects the beams of the sun, but not his warmth.



3. On the other hand, *some are satisfied with the vividness and the violence of their feelings.* Possessed of much excitability and want of temperament, they are, of course, susceptible of deep and powerful impression from the ordinances of religion. They are not without their religious joy, for even the stony ground hearers rejoiced for a while; and they are not without their religious sorrows. Their tears are plentiful, and their smiles in proportion. See them in the house of God, and none appear to feel more under the word than they. The sermon exerts a plastic power over their affections, and the preacher seems to have their hearts at command. They talk loudly of "happy frames," "precious seasons," "comfortable opportunities." But follow them from the house of God to their own habitation, and, oh, how changed the scene! the least offence, perhaps an unintentional one, raises a storm of passion, and the man that looked like a seraph in the sanctuary, seems more like a fury at home: follow them from the Sabbath into the days of the week; and you will see the man who appeared all for heaven on the Sunday, all for earth on the Monday: follow them from the assembly of the saints to the chief places of concourse, where they buy, and sell, and get gain; and you will see the man who looked so devout, irritated and litigious, selfish and overreaching, rude and insulting, envious and malicious, suspicious and defamatory. Yes; and perhaps in the evening of the same day, you will see him at a prayer meeting, enjoying, as he supposes, the holy season. Such is the delusion under which many are living. *Their religion is in great part, a mere susceptibility of impression from religious subjects; it is a selfish, religious voluptuousness.*

It is certain, that more importance is often times attached to "sensible enjoyment," as it is called—to lively frames and feelings—than belongs to them. There is a great variety in the constitution of the human mind, not only as it respects the power of thinking, but also of feeling: some feel far more acutely than others; this is observable separate and apart from godliness. The grace of God in conversion, operates a *moral*, not a physical change; it gives a new direction to the faculties, but leaves the faculties *themselves* as they were; consequently, with equal depth of conviction, and equal strength of principle, there will be various degrees of feeling, in different persons: the susceptibility of the mind to impression, and its liability to vivid feeling, were there before conversion, and they remain after it; and often times the lively emotion produced by affecting scenes, or seasons, or sermons, is partly an operation of nature, and partly of grace. A man may feel but little, and yet, if that little lead him to do much, it is great piety notwithstanding. Of two persons who listen to an affecting tale, one is seen to weep profusely, and is overwhelmed by the story; the other is attentive and thoughtful, but neither weeps nor sobs. They retire: the former, perhaps, to wipe her tears, and to forget the misery, which caused them; the latter to seek out the sufferer and relieve him. Which had most feeling? The former. Which most benevolence? The latter. The conduct of one was the result of nature, that of the other the effect of principle. Take another illustration, still more in point. Conceive of two real Christians listening to a sermon in which the preacher is discoursing from such a text as this—"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;" or this—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty might become rich." His object, as that of every man should be, who preaches from such a text, is to show that a sense of divine love to

us, should fill us with benevolence towards others. In order to bring the heart to feel its obligations, he gives a vivid description of God's love to man; and then, while his hearers are affected with God's mercy he calls upon them, in imitation of Jehovah, to relieve those who are in want; to bear with those who are vexatious; to forgive those who have injured them; to lay aside their wrath, and abound in all the expressions of genuine affection to their fellow-Christians. One of the individuals is deeply interested and affected by the first part of the discourse, sheds many tears, and is wrought up to a high pitch of feeling, while the preacher paints in glowing colors the love of God: the other hears with fixed attention, with genuine faith, the *whole* sermon, but his emotions are not powerful; he feels it is true, but it is tranquil feeling, unattended by either smiles or tears. They go home; the latter perhaps in silence, the former exclaiming to his friends, "Oh, what a delightful sermon! what a precious season! did you ever hear the love of God so impressively, so beautifully described?" With all his feeling, however, he does not go forth to relieve one child of want, nor does he attempt to extinguish one angry or implacable feeling towards an individual who had offended him. He is as passionate and unforgiving, as unkind and selfish, after the sermon, as he was before he heard it. The other retires with more of calm reflection than of strong emotion. Harken to his soliloquy:—"The preacher has given us a most astonishing idea of the love of God to us, and most clearly and affectingly deduced from it our obligations to love one another. Am I interested in this love? What! has this ineffable grace lavished all its benefits on me, a rebel against God, upon me a sinner? And shall I not feel this love constraining me to relieve the wants, to heal the sorrows, to forgive the offences, of my fellow-creatures? I will bear ill-will no longer; I will put out the kindling spark of revenge; I will go in a spirit of meekness and of love, and forgive the offender, and be reconciled to my brother." By that grace on which he depended, he is enabled to act up to his resolution. He becomes, upon principle, upon conviction, more merciful, more meek, more affectionate. Which has most feeling? The former. Which has most religion? The latter.

Any emotion, however pleasurable or intense, that does not lead to action, is mere natural, not holy, feeling: while that, however feeble it may seem, which leads us to do the will of God, is unfeigned piety. In order to ascertain our degree of religion, we must not merely ask, how we feel under sermons, but how this feeling leads us to act afterwards. The operative strength of our principles, and not the contemplative strength of our feelings, is the test of godliness. All that imaginative emotion, produced by a sense of God's love to us, which does not lead to a cultivation of the virtue considered in this treatise, is one of the delusive fires, which, instead of guiding aright, misleads the souls of men.

4. It is to be feared that many, in the present day, satisfy themselves that they are Christians, *because of their zeal in the cause of religion.* Happily, for the church of God, happily for the world at large, there is now a great and general eagerness for the diffusion of knowledge and piety. Throwing off the torpor of ages, the friends of Christ are laboring to extend his kingdom in every direction. Almost every possible object of Christian philanthropy is seized upon; societies are organized; means, adapted to every kind of instruments, are employed; the whole levy *en masse* of the religious world is called out; and Christendom presents an interesting scene of benevolent energy. Such a state of things

however, has its dangers in reference to personal religion, and may become an occasion of delusion to many. It does not require genuine piety to associate us with these movements: from a natural liberality of disposition, or regard to reputation, or a desire of influence, or by the compulsion of example, we may give our property; for all these motives are no doubt in partial operation, when giving is in fashion. And as to personal exertions, how many inducements may lead to this, besides a sincere and an ardent love to Christ; an inherent fondness for activity, a love of display, the spirit of party, the persuasion of friends—may all operate, and unquestionably do operate, in many cases, to produce astonishing efforts in the cause of religious benevolence, where there is a total absence of genuine piety. The mind of man, prone to self-deception and anxious to find some reasons to satisfy itself in reference to its eternal state, short of the true evidence of a renewed heart, is too apt to derive a false peace from the contemplation of its zeal. In proportion as the cause of the delusion approximates to the nature of true religion, is its power to blind and to mislead the judgment. If the mind can perceive any thing in itself, or in its operations, which bears the semblance of godliness, it will convert it into a means of lulling the conscience and removing anxiety. This is to many persons the fatal opiate, the soul-destroying imposture—their activity in the cause of Christian zeal: none are more diligent in their devotedness to the duties of committees, none are more constant in their attendance upon public meetings; others, again, weary themselves in their weekly rounds to collect the contributions of the rich or the offerings of the poor. These things, if they do not lead them coolly to reason and to conclude that they are believers, take off their attention from the real condition of their souls, leave them no leisure for reflection, repress the rising fear, and either stifle the voice of conscience, or enable them to drown its remonstrances in the eloquence of the platform, or in the discussions of the committee-room. We doubt not that some unworthy professors of religion, in the present age, resort to public meetings for the same reason as many a guilty votary of pleasure does to public amusements—to forget his own condition, and to turn away his ear, for a short season, from the voice that speaks to him from within. Individuals are known to us all, who, amidst the greatest zeal for various public institutions, are living in malice and all uncharitableness, in the indulgence of a predominate selfishness, and uncontrolled wrath. But it will not do.—This is not piety. Could we support the whole expenditure of the Missionary Society by our affluence, and direct its councils by our wisdom, and keep alive its energy by our ardor, and yet at the same time were destitute of love,—we should perish eternally, amidst the munificence of our liberality.

And of those who *have* the grace of love, and who are real believers, some are far more deficient in its influence and activity than they should be; and endeavor to quiet an accusing conscience with the wretched sophistry, "that as a Christian cannot be supposed to excel in every thing, their forte lies in the *active* virtues of religion more than in the *passive* graces; and that, therefore, any little deficiency in the latter is made up by their greater abundance of the former." This reasoning is as false in its principle, as it is frequent, we fear, in its adoption. Where, in all the word of God, is this species of moral composition of duties taught or sanctioned? This is really carrying the popish principle of indulgences into our own private concerns, and creating a surplus stock of one virtue to be available for the deficiencies of another.

It is to be apprehended, that as every age is

marked with a peculiar tendency, either to some prevailing error or defect, the tendency of the prevailing age is to exalt the *active* virtues of piety, at the expense of the *passive* ones; and, while the former are forced into an increasing luxuriance, to permit the latter to wither in their shade; or, at least, there is a disposition to devote all that time and attention to the culture of one which ought to be shared between both. It cannot be denied that our love of activity and of display, will generally incline us to prefer the cultivation of public spirit, rather than the more private and self-denying tempers of meekness, humility, and forbearance; for it is inconceivably more easy, and more pleasant, to float upon the tide of public feeling towards the objects of religious zeal, than to wade against the stream of our own corrupt tendencies, and to accomplish an end which he only who seeth in secret will duly appreciate.

5. May it not be said, that in many cases, a *PROFESSION* of religion seems to release individuals from all obligation to cultivate the dispositions which it necessarily implies; who, instead of deriving from this circumstance a stimulus to seek after the Christian temper, find in it a reason for general negligence?

They have been admitted as members of a church, and have thus received, as it were, a certificate of personal religion; and, instead of being anxious from that moment to excel in every virtue that can adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, they sink into carelessness and lukewarmness. A profession of religion, unsupported by Christian love, will only increase our guilt here, and sink us immeasurably lower in the bottomless pit hereafter. Woe, eternal woe, will be upon that man who bears the name of our Lord Jesus without his image. Woe, eternal woe, will be upon those members of our churches, who are content to find their way into the fellowship of the faithful, without adding to their character the lustre of this sacred virtue.

Thus have we shown how many things there are, which, though good in themselves, when performed from right motives and in connection with other parts of religion, cannot, in the absence of love, be depended upon as unequivocal evidences of personal piety. Let us beware of self-deception in this awfully important business: for it will be dreadful beyond the power of imagination to conceive of, to find ourselves the next moment after death, amidst the horrors of the infernal pit, instead of the felicities of the celestial city. Love is required by God, as an essential part of true religion; and the total absence of it as necessarily prevents a man from being a true Christian, as the want of temperance or purity. Besides this is the temper of heaven; this is the unvarying state of mind in the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; this is the heart of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and the image of God the Judge of all. Without this, there would be no meetness for the society of Paradise, no fitness for an association of which the bond of fellowship is love; without this there can be no grace here, and therefore, no glory hereafter.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE PROPERTIES OF CHRISTIAN LOVE AS STATED BY THE APOSTLE.

By a beautiful personification, the apostle has described this grace under the figure of an interesting female, who, like an angel of light, lifts her cherubic form and smiling countenance amidst the children of men; shedding, as she passes along, a healing influence on the wounds of society, hushing the



notes of discord, driving before her the spirits of mischief, bringing the graces in her train, and converting earth into a resemblance of heaven. Her charms are sufficient to captivate every heart, if every heart were as it should be; and her influence such as every mind should court. "Love suffereth long, and is kind: love envieth not: love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

1. The first remark which I make on these properties, is, *that they describe such expressions of our love as have a particular reference to our TEMPER.*

By the temper, we mean the prevailing spirit and disposition of the mind, as it respects the irascible or selfish affections. If we examine, we shall find that all the qualities here enumerated, bear on these dispositions. There are other operations and manifestations of charity, beside those which are here specified—such, for instance, as justice and chastity; for it is impossible to love mankind, and violate the rules of either of these duties: but the apostle restricts his specification to those properties of it which are comprehended in the word *temper*. Nothing, surely, can teach more clearly, or more impressively, the great truth,—that religion must govern the temper,—than this chapter. It is strange, but true, that many seem to think that temper is that part of a man's self and conduct, over which religion has no legal jurisdiction. They admit their obligations to be holy, and moral, and devout; but they do not feel, at least do not acknowledge, that it is their duty to be meek, gentle, and kind. They may not affirm so much in words, but it is the secret and tacit system of conduct which they have adopted.—Hence it is, that although they are correct in their morals, and regular in their attendance on the means of grace, they are withal so apt to receive offence, and so forward to give it; they are either so passionate, or so sullen; so implacable or revengeful;—that the real excellences of their character are lost sight of in the deep shadow of their infirmities and the ways of godliness are spoken ill of on their account. This arises from their not being sufficiently convinced of the evil of such infirmities; and this blindness itself is the consequence of a supposition, that the removal of the evil is physically impossible. "Our temper," say they, "is as much a part of ourselves, as the color of our skins, or the conformation of our body; it is naturally inherent in us, and we cannot help it." As long as this is the conviction of the judgment, or the admission of a deceitful heart, it is almost vain to hope for a reformation. But let us reason with such persons.

It must be admitted, that there do exist constitutional tendencies to the exercise of particular passions: without being able to account for these effects, or whether the cause be wholly in the body or partly in the mind, the effects are too obvious to be denied. Nay, these constitutional tendencies are no less hereditary, sometimes, than direct physical disease. One man is naturally propense to passion; another to sullenness; a third to envy; a fourth to pride; all this is indisputable. But these tendencies are not uncontrollable: they are impulses, but not constraints; incitements, but not compulsions. It would subvert the whole system of moral obligation, to suppose that we were under a physical necessity of sinning, which we certainly should be, if inherent tendencies were beyond the power of moral restraint. That cannot be duty which a man could not do if he would; nor can that be sin, which he cannot avoid by any exercise of disposition or will.

If, therefore, we cannot help indulging revenge, envy, pride, unkindness, they are no sins: and, in this case would such vices have been condemned, if there were an impossibility in the way of avoiding them? Certainly not. It is no actual sin to have the liability; the guilt consists in indulging it.

If the existence of constitutional propensities be an excuse for their indulgence, the *licentious* man may plead it in justification of his sensuality; for he may have stronger incitements to his besetting sin, than many others who run not to the same excess of riot. But if licentiousness or cruelty cannot be excused on this ground, why should anger, revenge, or envy? Once let it be granted, that physical tendency is an excuse for any kind of sinful indulgence, no matter of what kind, and you at once overturn the whole system of Christian morals.

Besides, natural propensities, of the most impetuous kinds, have been, in innumerable instances, not only successfully resisted, but almost entirely vanquished. We have known persons, who were once addicted to all kinds of impure gratifications, but who have become as distinguished for chastity as they once were for lewdness; drunkards have become sober; men as furious as enraged tigers, have become gentleness itself. It is said of that eminently holy and useful man, Mr. FLETCHER, of MADELEY, that "he was meek, like his Master, as well as lowly in heart. Not that he was so by nature, but a man of strong passions, and prone to anger in particular; insomuch that he has frequently spent the greater part of the night bathed in tears, imploring victory over his own spirit. And he did not strive in vain. He did obtain the victory in a very eminent degree. Yea, so thoroughly had grace subdued nature; so fully was he renewed in the spirit of his mind;—that for many years before his death, I believe he was never observed by any one, friend or foe, to be out of temper on any provocation whatever. The testimony that Bishop Burnet bears of Archbishop Leighton, might be borne of him with equal propriety. After an intimate acquaintance with the Archbishop for many years, and after being with him by night and by day, at home and abroad, in public and in private; I must say, I never heard an idle word drop from his lips; I never saw him in any temper, in which I myself would not have wished to be found at death." What a character! What a testimony! But it is not the beauty, the inexpressible moral loveliness of it alone, which should be remarked, but the convincing proof which it furnishes, that a naturally bad temper may be subdued. Many instances of this kind have existed, which accumulate accusation and reproach upon the man who indulges in a sinful, constitutional tendency of any kind, under the mistaken idea, that it is not only absolutely invincible, but altogether irresistible.

That every thing which pertains to our *physical* nature will remain after our conversion, is true, for grace produces no change in the bodily organization; and that occasional ebullitions of inherent natural temper will occur in our renewed state, is allowed, for very few attain to Mr. Fletcher's eminence of piety; but if we are as passionate and revengeful, as proud and envious, as selfish and unkind, as we were before our supposed conversion, we may be assured that it is but a *supposed* conversion. It is nothing that we go regularly to worship—it is nothing that we feel under sermons—it is nothing that we have holy frames and feelings; for a heart under the predominant influence of irascible passions, can no more have undergone the change of the new birth, than one that is filled with a prevailing lasciviousness: and where the heart is renewed, and the badness of the temper is not constant, but only occasional—is not regnant, but only

prominent,—it is, in so far as it prevails, a deduction from real piety.

True it is, that inherent natural tendency will require more vigorous resistance and unsleeping vigilance, more laborious effort, more painful mortification, more earnest prayer, on the part of those who are conscious of it, than is necessary on theirs in whom it does not exist. It is not uncommon for such persons to be contented with a few feeble struggles, and then to flatter themselves with the idea that there is more grace displayed in those efforts than in the conduct of others, who, being naturally good tempered, are never exposed to *their* temptations. To adorn religion, will certainly cost them far more labor than it does those of a better natural temper; just as a man afflicted with a weakly constitution, or a chronic disease, must take more pains with himself than one who has sound health—and he will, after all, look more sickly than the other; but as his bodily malady does exist, he must give himself this trouble, or he cannot rationally expect the least share of health: so it is with the soul, if the disease of an evil temper be there, immense and unwearied pains must be taken to resist and suppress it. This is what is meant by our “plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand;” by “denying ourselves;” by “mortifying the deeds of the body;” by “the spirit struggling against the flesh;” by “casting aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset us.” The subjection of our temper to the control of religion, is a thing which *must be done*. It is that to which we must apply, as to a matter of indispensable necessity; it is an object which we must accomplish by any mortification of feeling, and by any expenditure of labor. The virtues which we are about to consider, will spring up in no soil without culture; but there are some soils peculiarly unfriendly to their growth, and in which productions of an opposite kind thrive spontaneously, and grow with frightful luxuriance: with these greater pains must be taken, and greater patience exercised, till at length the beautiful imagery of the prophet shall be realized—“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

But for effecting such a transformation, there must be a degree of labor and painstaking, which very few are willing to endure: “This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting.”

To obtain this victory over ourselves, much time must be spent in the closet—much communion with God must be maintained—much strong crying with tears must be poured forth. We must undergo what the apostle calls, by a term very appropriate, as well as strikingly descriptive, a “crucifixion;”—“we must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof;”—“we must keep”—or as the word signifies, “*beat under our body*;”—we must bring our mind, from time to time, under the influence of redeeming grace; we must ascend the hill of Calvary, and gaze upon that scene of love, till our cold hearts melt, our hard hearts soften, and all the cruel selfishness of our nature relaxes into gentleness; we must make all the doctrines of the gospel, with all the motives they contain, bear upon our nature: the example of the meek and lowly Jesus must be contemplated, and admired, and copied; and especially, after all, must we breathe forth internal longings for the influence of the Holy Ghost, without whose aid our souls will no more yield to the influence of motives than the polar ice will melt by the feeble beams of the great northern constellation. We must pray for the Spirit, long for the Spirit, expect the Spirit, live, walk, struggle, in the Spirit. Thus must

we set ourselves to work to obtain more of that love, which alone can subdue our evil temper.

2. *The properties here enumerated are ALL included in love, and must ALL be sought by every real Christian.*

The general disposition includes all these particular and distinct operations, and opposes all these separate evils; it is as much opposed to envy as to revenge, and is as humble as it is kind. Consequently, we are not to select for ourselves such modes of its operation as we may think most adapted to our taste and to our circumstances—giving to these all our attention, and neglecting the rest. One is not to say, “I am most inclined to kindness, and I shall cherish this property, which I find to be more easy and pleasant than to cultivate humility and meekness.” Another is not to say, “I find no great difficulty in forgiving injuries, and I shall practice this: but as for envy, I am so propense to it, that I shall give up all attempts to eradicate this weed from my heart.” This parcelling out of the disposition, and selecting that part which is most congenial to our constitutional tendency, will not do. Yet is the attempt made by many, who, to appease, in some measure, the clamorous importunity of their conscience, and at the same time to avoid the obligations of benevolence as a whole, thus impose upon themselves with a supposed attention to some partial view of the subject. They carry on a wretched and useless attempt to balance those points in which they succeed against those in which they fail: their excellences against their defects. It may be said, in reference to this law of our duty, as well as to the still more comprehensive one, that “He that offendeth but in one point is guilty of all;” for that authority which saith, “Be ye kind,” saith also, “Thou shalt not think evil of thy neighbor.” These amiable properties must go together; the general principle which comprises them must be taken as a whole. It is one and indivisible, and as such must be received by us. “Charity is the bond of perfectness.” Like the band round the sheaf, it holds all the separate ears together. Instead, therefore, of allowing ourselves to select, we must open our hearts to its whole and undivided influence; and if, indeed, there be any one of its properties in which we are more than ordinarily deficient, to that one we must direct a still greater portion of our attention.

3. *These properties are perfectly homogeneous.*—They are of the same nature, and are, therefore, helpful to each other. In reality, if we cultivate one, we are preparing the way for others. There is no contrariety of influence, no discordant operation, no clashing demands. When we are rooting up one evil by love, we drag up others with it: when we subdue pride, we weaken our susceptibility of offence: when we cherish kindness, we impoverish selfishness. This is an immense advantage in the cultivation of the Christian temper; and it shows us that if there be one besetting sinful propensity in the heart, it draws all the energy of the mind to itself, and throws a dark and chilling shadow over the whole soul. The subjugation of this one bad temper will weaken many others that depend for existence upon its support; and make way for an opposite excellence, which is as extensively beneficial as the other was injurious. This is a powerful incentive to the arduous and necessary duty of self-improvement: an evil disposition eradicated, is a good one implanted; and one good one implanted, is a way made for others to follow.

4. *As these properties, while they are separate as to their nature, all unite in a common and generic disposition, our first and chief attention must be to that which is the common principle.* These tempers are so many modes in which love operates, so many



streams from a common fountain, so many branches from the same root. While, therefore, we seek to guide the separate streams, and trim the different branches aright, our care must be exercised chiefly in reference to the parent source. We must aim steadily, and labor constantly, at the increase of love itself. We must do every thing we can to strengthen the principle of benevolence to man. In every step of our progress through the treatise before us, we must constantly keep in mind its connection with this great master principle. The way to abound in the effects is to increase the power of the cause.

5. We are to recollect, that these properties *are to be expected only in proportion to the degree in which love itself exists in the heart.*

On reading this chapter, and seeing what is required of the Christian, and comparing it with the usual conduct of religious people, we feel almost involuntarily led to say, "If this be love, where then, except in heaven, is it to be found." To this I reply, the apostle does not say that every man who pretends to this virtue acts thus: nor does he say that every one who possesses it, acts thus in all instances, but that love itself does it. This is the way in which it acts, when allowed to exert its own energies: if it were suffered to have its full scope, and to bear sway in us without any check, this would be the invariable effect: our not seeing, therefore, a perfect exemplification of this principle, is no proof that it does not possess these properties, but only that *we* are imperfectly under its influence. This branch of piety, like every other, may be possessed in various degrees; and, of course, it is only in proportion as we possess the disposition that we shall manifest its operations. This should prepare us to distinguish between the utter want and the weakness of love; a distinction necessary from our proneness to despondency in reference to ourselves, and to censoriousness in reference to our neighbors.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MEEKNESS OF LOVE.

*"Charity suffereth long—is not easily provoked."*

I CLASS these two together, because they bear a near affinity to each other. The word in the original translated "suffereth long," signifies "to have a long mind," to the end of whose patience, provocations cannot easily reach. It does not mean patience in reference to the afflictions which come from God, but to the injuries and provocations which come from man—perhaps the most correct idea which we can attach to it is, *forbearance*; a disposition which under long continued offences holds back anger, and is not hasty to punish or to revenge. Its kindred property, here classed with it, is nearly allied to it, "is not easily provoked," or "is not exasperated." The word signifies a violent emotion of the mind, a paroxysm of anger; so that the distinction between the two terms appears to be this: the property intended by the latter seems to be the power of love to curb our wrath, and that intended by the former its ability to repress revenge.

There are three things which Christian love, in reference to the irascible passions, will prevent.

1. An *irritable* and *petulant* disposition. There is in some persons an excessive liability to be offended; a morbid sensibility, which is kindled to anger by the least possible injury, whether that injury be intentional or unintentional. They are all combustible, and ignite by a spark. A word, nay, a look, is enough to inflame them. They are ever ready to quarrel with any, or every body; and re-

mind us of what Cromwell said of John Lilburne, "that he was so quarrelsome, that if he could find nobody else to quarrel with, John would quarrel with Lilburne, and Lilburne with John." The whole soul seems one entire sensitiveness of offence. Instead of "suffering long," they do not suffer at all; and instead of not being easily provoked, they are provoked by any thing, and sometimes by nothing. Love will prevent all this, and produce a disposition the very reverse. It is concerned for the happiness of others; and will not wantonly afflict them, and render them wretched, by such an exhibition of unlovely and unchristian temper. It will remove this diseased sensibility, and without blunting the natural feelings, will calm this sinful excitability. Many things it will not see or hear—judging them quite beneath its dignity to notice; others it will pass by, as not of sufficient consequence to require explanation. It will keep a strict guard over its feelings, holding the reign with a tight hand. Its first business is with the disposition itself. This is important for us to notice; for if we indulge the *feeling* of anger, it will be impossible to smother the flame in our bosom; like the burning materials of a volcano, it will at length burst out in fiery eruptions. Here, then, is our first object: to gain that forbearance of disposition which does not allow itself to be irritated or soured; to acquire that command, not only over our words and actions, but over our emotions, which shall make us patient and tranquil amidst insults and injuries; which shall keep down the temperament of the soul, and preserve the greatest coolness. Irritability, I know, is in part a physical quality; but it is in our power, by God's help, to calm it. Love will make us willing to think the best of those with whom we have to do; it will disarm us of that suspicion and mistrust, which make us regard every body as intending to injure us; will cause us to find out pleas for those who have done us harm, and when this is impossible, will lead us to pity their weakness or forgive their wickedness.

What an enemy to himself is an irritable man! He is a self-tormentor of the worst kind. He is scarcely ever at peace. His bosom is always in a state of tumult. To him the calm sunshine of the breast is unknown. A thousand petty vexations disturb his repose. Unhappy man, even though he so far succeed, as to restrain the agitations of his mind from bursting out into passion, yet has the burning sense of torment within. Regard to his own happiness, as well as to the happiness of others, calls upon him to cultivate that love, which shall allay the inflammatory state of his mind, and restore a soundness which will not be thus wounded by every touch.

2. The next thing which love prevents, is *immoderate anger*; that anger which the apostle has described in the expression we are now elucidating, as amounting to a paroxysm of wrath; or which, in ordinary language, we call "being in a passion." It would be to oppose both reason and revelation, to assert that all anger is sin. "Be ye angry," saith the apostle, "and sin not." "A violent suppression of the natural feelings is not, perhaps, the best expedient for obviating their injurious effects; and though nothing requires a more vigilant restraint than the emotion of anger, the uneasiness of which it is productive is, perhaps, best allayed by its natural and temperate expression; not to say that it is a wise provision in the economy of nature, for the expression of injury and the preservation of the peace and decorum of society." A wise and temperate expression of our displeasure against injuries or offences, is by no means incompatible with Christian love; this grace intending only to check those furious sallies of our wrath, which are tor-

menting to ourselves and injurious to those with whom we have to do. Sinful anger is lamentably common, and is not sufficiently subdued among the professors of religion. In cases of offence, they are too often excited to criminal degrees of passion; their countenance is flushed, their brow lowers, their eye darts indignant flashes, and their tongue pours forth loud and stormy words of reviling accusations. To diminish and prevent this disposition, let us dwell much upon the *evil consequences* of it.

*It disturbs our peace*, and interrupts our happiness; and this is an evil about which we ought not to be indifferent. A passionate man cannot be a happy man; he is the victim of a temper, which, like a serpent, dwells in his bosom to sting and torment him.

*It destroys the comfort of those with whom he has to do*: his children often bear the fury of the temper; his wife has her cup of conjugal felicity embittered by the venom; his servants tremble as at the rage of a tyrant; and those with whom he transacts the business of this life, dread the gusts of his passion, by which they have often been rendered uncomfortable. He is a common disturber of the circle in which he moves.

*It interrupts his enjoyment of religion*, brings guilt upon his conscience, and unfits him for the season and the act of communion with God. A beautiful illustration of this part of the subject may be here introduced from one of the most striking of English writers:—"Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our temper; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and, therefore, is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds: but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant—descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the liberation and frequent weighing of its wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over, and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man: when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity; his duty met with the infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument; and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention: and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer; and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed—made even as the brow of Jesus and smooth as the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, laden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.\*"

\*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

*Sinful anger dishonors religion*, and causes the ways of godliness to be spoken ill of. The mists of passion envelope religion with a dense medium, through which its lustre is but dimly seen. A passionate Christian is an object of sport to the profane, a butt of ridicule to fools, whose scorn is reflected from him upon piety itself.

But, perhaps, it will be said, "Tell us how we may cure the disposition; its existence we admit, and its evil we know by experience, and deplore." I say, then,

*Look at the disposition as it really is*, attentively consider its evil nature, and trace its mischievous consequences. "Anger sets the house on fire, and all the spirits are busy upon trouble, and intend propulsion and defence, displeasure and revenge; it is a short madness, and an eternal enemy to discourse, and sober counsels, and fair conversation; it is a fever in the heart, and a calenture in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over. It hath in it the trouble of sorrow, and the heats of lust, and the disease of revenge, and the bodings of a fever, and the rashness of precipitancy, and the disturbance of persecution. If it proceed from a great cause, it turns to fury; if from a small cause, it is peevishness: and so it is always terrible or ridiculous. It makes a man's body deformed and contemptible, the voice horrid, the eyes cruel, the face pale or fiery, the gait fierce. It is neither manly nor ingenuous, and is a passion fitter for flies and wasps than for persons professing nobleness and bounty. It is a confluence of all the irregular passions.—There is in it envy and scorn, fear and sorrow, pride and prejudice, rashness and inconsideration, rejoicing in evil, and a desire to inflict it.\*"

Such is the portraiture of this disposition, drawn by the hand of no mean artist. Let the passionate man look at the picture, and learn to hate it; for, like an infuriated serpent, it need only be seen to be abhorred.

Let us *reject all excuses for the indulgence of it*; for so long as we palliate it, we shall not attempt to mortify it. It cannot be defended, either on the ground of constitutional tendency, or the greatness of the provocation, or the suddenness of the offence, or the transient duration of the fit, or that there is less evil in gusts of anger than in seasons of sullenness: no—nothing can justify it: and if we are sincere in our desires to control it, we shall admit that it is indefensible and criminal, and condemn it without hesitation or extenuation.

*We must be persuaded that it is possible to control it*; for if we despair of victory, we shall not engage in the conflict. Hope of success is essential to success itself.

It is certain that by using right means a hasty temper may be subdued, for it has been conquered in very many instances. It is said of SOCRATES, the wisest and most virtuous of heathen sages, that in the midst of domestic vexations and public disorders, he maintained such an undisturbed serenity, that he was never seen to leave his own house or return to it with a ruffled countenance. If on any occasion he felt a propensity to anger, he checked the rising storm by lowering the tone of his voice, and resolutely assuming a more than usual gentleness of aspect and manner. He not only refrained from acts of revenge, but triumphed over his adversaries, by disregarding the insults and injuries they offered him. This was more remarkable, as in acquiring this dominion over his passions, he had to struggle against natural propensities which ran in an opposite direction. ZOPHYRUS, an eminent physiognomist, declared that he discovered in the

\*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.



features of the philosopher evident traces of many vicious inclinations: the friends of SOCRATES, who were present, ridiculed the ignorance of this pretender to extraordinary sagacity; but the sage ingeniously acknowledged the penetration of ZOPHYRUS, and confessed that he was naturally prone to vice, but that he had subdued his inclinations by the power of reason and philosophy. Let professing Christians learn, from this distinguished heathen, that it is possible to subdue natural temper, however bad and however violent it may be.

*Make its cure a matter of desire.* What we ardently long for, we shall vigorously pursue. Confess your sin: frankly say, "I am indeed too irritable, too passionate, too revengeful. I see the sinfulness of indulging such a temper; I am disturbed and disgraced by it; and by God's help I will subdue it. I will spare no pains, shrink from no sacrifice, be discouraged by no defeat, till I gain the victory over myself."

*Meditate upon the patience of God,* who bears with your innumerable offences against Him, and forgives them all. Consider the example of Jesus Christ, who meekly "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself; and amidst ingratitude, insults, and provocations of the basest kind, was mild as the morning sun in Autumn."

*Seek to acquire a habit of self-control*—a power over your feelings, which will enable you to be ever on your guard, and to repress the first emotions of passion. If possible, seal your lips in silence when the storm is rising: shut up your anger in your own bosom, and, like fire that wants air and vent, it will soon expire. Angry words often prove a fan to the spark: many persons, who in the beginning are but slightly displeased, talk themselves at length into a violent passion. Never speak till you are cool; the man who can command his tongue, will find no difficulty in governing his spirit. And when you do speak, let it be in meekness: "a soft answer turneth away wrath." When you see others angry, let it be an admonition to you to be cool; thus you will receive the furious indiscretions of others like a stone into a bed of moss, where it will lie quietly without rebounding.

*Stop your anger in the beginning.* It is easier to put out a spark than a conflagration. It would be well always to terminate the conversation, and quit the company of an individual, when anger is creeping in. "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."

*Avoid disputations,* which often engender strifes; and especially avoid them in reference to persons of known irritability. Who would contend with a snake or a hornet?

*Brood not over injuries;* "Else," says Mr. Baxter, "you will be devils to yourselves, tempt yourselves when you have no others to tempt you, and make your solitude as dangerously provoking as company."\*

*Beware of tale-bearers,* and do not suffer their reports to rouse your resentments.

*"Be not inquisitive into the affairs of other men,* nor the faults of thy servants, nor the mistakes of thy friends; lest thou go out to gather sticks to kindle a fire, which shall burn thine own house."

*Look at others who are addicted to passion,* and see how unlovely they appear.

*Commission some faithful and affectionate friend,* to watch over and admonish you.

But especially mortify pride and cultivate HUMILITY.—"Only by pride cometh contention." "He

that is of a proud heart, stirreth up strife." Passion is the daughter of pride, meekness the offspring of humility. Humility is the best cure for anger, sullenness, and revenge. He that thinks much of himself, will think much of every little offence committed against him, while he that thinks little of his own importance, will think lightly of what is done to offend him. Every irritable, passionate, or revengeful person is certainly a proud one, and should begin the cure of his passion by the removal of his pride.

But we need go no further than the chapter before us, for an antidote to anger. Love is sufficient of itself; we must seek to have more of this heavenly virtue. Love cannot be either passionate or revengeful. Love is full of benevolence and good will, and therefore cannot allow itself to indulge those tempers which are unfriendly to the happiness of mankind. Let us seek to strengthen this parent principle, which will prevent the growth of whatever is evil, and promote the advancement of all that is excellent.

One caution may here be suggested for the encouragement of those who are particularly tried with an irritable temper, and that is—not to despond; if, in the work of mortification, they meet with many defeats, do not be in a passion with yourselves, for being in a passion, for this will only increase the evil you are anxious to destroy. Go calmly, yet courageously, to the conflict; if victorious be not elated, if defeated be not disheartened. Often you will have to mourn your failures, and sometimes be ready to imagine that you are doomed to the hopeless task of Sisyphus, whose stone always rolled back again, when, by immense labor, he had urged it nearly to the summit of the hill. Do not expect an easy or a perfect conquest. Mourn your defeats, but do not despair. Many, after a few unsuccessful efforts, give up the cause, and abandon themselves to the tyranny of their passions. In this conflict, unsuccessful struggles are more honorable than unresisting submission.

### 3. Love will of course prevent revenge.

Revenge is a term that a Christian should blot out from his vocabulary with his own penitential tears, or with the drops of his gratitude for the pardon he has received from God. There is no passion more hostile to the very genius of Christianity, or more frequently forbidden by its authority, than this; and there is none to which the depravity of human nature more powerfully excites us. The volume of history is stained, from the beginning to the end, with the blood which has been shed by the demon of revenge. Mankind, in every age and country, have groaned under the misery inflicted by this restless and cruel spirit, which no mischief can satisfy, no suffering appease. Revenge has converted men into wild beasts, and inspired them with a wish to tear each other to pieces. It is not likely that such a temper as this would meet with the least toleration or sanction in the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose person was an incarnation, and whose gospel is an emanation, of love. Revenge is admitted by some as justifiable to a certain extent: by the reasoning and conduct of the world, the principle is allowed, yea honored, and only condemned in its most vicious excess. Wars, duels, railings, private animosities, that do not infringe on the peace of society, are all justified on this ground.—Mankind alter the golden rule, and do unto others, not as they would that others should do, but as others do unto them in a way of evil; and this, so far from being blamed, is generally applauded as honorable and dignified. In the estimate of the people of the world, the man who refuses to resent an injury which he has received, is a poor mean-spirited creature, unworthy to associate with men of honor,

\* Baxter's Catholic Directions; from which vast fund of practical theology, many of the particulars of this chapter are derived.

But whatever may be the maxims of the *world*, revenge is certainly forbidden by every page of the word of God. "The discretion of a man defereth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." Private revenge was certainly forbidden under the Old Testament, and still more explicitly under the New. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," said our Lord, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you: that you may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven." The same sentiments are enjoined by the apostles.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." These passages are decisive upon the point, that revenge in any form, or in any measure, is forbidden by the Christian religion.

The misfortune of many is, that they mistake the meaning of the term *revenge*—or rather they confine its application to the grosser, more mischievous, and more violent expressions of wrath: they think that nothing is revenge but cutting or maiming the person, openly slandering the reputation, or wantonly injuring the property. Such, it must be admitted, are fearful ebullitions of this destructive passion; but they are not the *only* ways in which it expresses itself. There are a thousand petty acts of spite and ill-will, by which a revengeful spirit may operate. If we refuse to speak to another by whom we have been injured, and pass him with silent or manifest scorn; if we take delight in talking of his failings, and in lowering him in the opinion of others; if we show ill will to his children or relations on his account: if we watch for an opportunity to perform some little act of annoyance towards him, and feel gratified in the thought that we have given him trouble or pain;—all this is done in a spirit of retaliation, and is as truly though not so dreadfully, the actings of revenge, as if we proceeded to inflict bodily injury. The spirit of revenge simply means returning evil for evil, and taking pleasure in doing so. It may go to the extremes of calumny and murder, or may confine itself to the infliction of minor wrongs; but if we, in any way, resent an injury with ill will towards the person who committed it, this is revenge.

A question will here arise, whether, according to this view, we are not forbidden to defend our persons, our property, and our reputation, from the aggressions of lawless mischief? Certainly not. If an assassin attempt to maim or to murder me, I am allowed to resist the attack, even to extremity; for this is not avenging an evil, but an effort to prevent one. If our character in society be asspersed, we must endeavor, by peaceful means to gain an apology and exculpation; and if this cannot be obtained, we are authorized to appeal to the law: for, if calumny were not punished, society could not exist. If, however, instead of appealing to the law, we were to calumniate in return; if we were to inflict bodily injury on the aggressor, to take delight in injuring, but in other ways;—this would be revenge; but to

seek the protection of the law, without, at the same time, indulging in malice,—this is self-defence, and the defence of society. If we are injured, or are likely to be injured, in our property, we must try, by all private and honorable means, to prevent the aggression; be willing to settle the affair by the mediation of wise and impartial men, and keep our minds free from anger, ill-will, and malice, towards the aggressors: and, as a last resource, we are justifiable in submitting the cause, if it cannot be settled by any other means, to the decision of a court of justice. No Christian should resort to the tribunal of public justice till every method of private adjustment has failed.

As it respects the propriety of Christians going to law *with each other*, the testimony of the apostle is decisive. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, to go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Men professing godliness, especially members of the same religious community, ought, in cases of difference about property or character, to settle all their disputes by the mediation of their own brethren; and if either party decline such arbitration, he must be accountable for all the scandal thrown on the Christian profession by the legal measures to which the other may find it necessary to resort for the protection of his rights. In this case, the guilt of infringing the apostolic regulation lies on him who refuses to accede to this Scriptural method of settling the differences that may arise among those who profess to be the disciples of Christ. Whatever award is made, in the case of private arbitration, both parties should abide by it; nor must the individual against whom the decision is given, feel any ill-will, or cherish any revenge, towards his successful competitor.

The law of love requires that innumerable minor offences should be passed over without being noticed, or suffered to disturb our peace of mind. And those which we find it necessary to have explained, require the utmost caution and delicacy. In these cases, love will lead us to the offender, in the spirit of meekness, to ask, not to demand—to solicit, in the most gentle manner—an explanation of the injurious treatment. In a great majority of cases, this line of conduct would stifle the animosity while it is yet a spark. If, on the contrary, we permit ourselves to take offence, and have our feelings wounded, or our anger roused; if, instead of mildly and affectionately expostulating, and seeking reconciliation, we brood over the injury, and retire in disgust, to indulge in sullenness, or to watch for an opportunity of revenge;—this is being "easily provoked," and the very opposite of "suffering long."

## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE KINDNESS OF LOVE.

"*Charity is kind.*"

IT is a decisive proof, and a striking display, of the excellence of the Christian religion, that it enjoins



not only the loftier and more rigid excellences of the human character, but those also which are delicately amiable and tender; not only the masculine virtues, but the feminine graces; in short, that it not only prepares its possessor to be a patriot on the great theatre of his country, or a spectacle of heroic martyrdom to God, to angels, and to men,—but a sympathising friend in the social and domestic circles. Love can either expand its benevolence to the claims of the whole human family, or concentrate its emotions, for a time, in one individual object of pity, or affection. “Love is kind.” Kindness means a disposition to please—an anxiety, manifested by our conduct, to promote the comfort of our species. Pity commiserates their sorrows, mercy relieves their wants and mitigates their woes; but kindness is a general attention to their comfort. It is thus described and distinguished by a celebrated writer on English synonyms. “The terms affectionate and fond characterize feelings; kind is an epithet applied to outward actions, as well as inward feelings; a disposition is affectionate or fond; a behavior is kind. A person is *affectionate*, who has the object of his regard strongly in his mind, who participates in his pleasures and in his pains, and is pleased with his society. A person is *kind*, who expresses a tender sentiment, or does any service in a pleasant manner. Relatives should be *affectionate* to each other: we should be kind to all who stand in need of our kindness.” Kindness, then, appears to be an affectionate behavior. This is what the apostle means, when he admonishes us to “be kindly affectioned one to another.”

Let us view the kind man in contrast with some other characters.

He is opposed to the *rigid, severe, and censorious* person, who will make no allowance for the infirmities or inexperience of others; but judges harshly, reproves sternly, and speaks severely of all who do not come up to his standard. Kindness, on the contrary, makes all reasonable allowances, frames the best excuses it can, consistently with truth and holiness; speaks of the offender in a way of mitigation, and to him in a way of compassion; does not publish nor exaggerate his faults, and endeavors to find out some redeeming qualities to set off against his failings.

A kind man is opposed to a *proud and overbearing* one. The latter is ever seeking an opportunity to display his superiority, and make you feel your inferiority; and cares not how much your feelings are hurt by this offensive exhibition of his consequence. Kindness, if conscious, as it sometimes must be, of its superiority, takes care that those who are below it shall not feel a painful sense of their inferiority. Without removing the distinctions of social life, or sacrificing its dignity, it will conceal as much as possible, its pre-eminence, or unite it with such affability as shall render it by no means unpleasant.

Kindness is opposed to *coldness and selfishness* of disposition. There are persons who, though neither cruel, nor injurious, nor really hard-hearted, are yet so cold, and distant, and retiring, and repulsive, that they can neither be approached nor moved.—They look upon the scenes around them with the fixed and beamless eye, the chillness and acquiescence, of the statue, for they have no interest in the concerns of the world. But kindness is the visible expression of a feeling and merciful heart; it is the goings forth of a tender and susceptible mind; it claims kindred with the human race; it is all ear to listen—all heart to feel—all eye to examine and to weep—all hand and foot to relieve; it invites the sufferer with kind words, and sends him not empty away.

Kindness is opposed to a *rain and ostentatious*

*liberality*. Some will be charitable, if they may have spectators of their good deeds, who shall go and proclaim their alms: thus the weaknesses of human nature often come in the place of duty, and supply the want of principle, though certainly without any advantage to their possessor. They spoil the action by their mode of performing it; for they will, in the most indelicate manner, make the object of their bounty feel a painful sense of obligation: they will state the exact amount, almost in pecuniary value, of the favors they have conferred; and then go away and give such publicity to their doings, that the beneficiary is almost every where sure to hear of what has been done for him.

Kindness will, on the other hand, conceal, as much as possible, that it is actually conferring a favor; will do every thing to cause it to descend lightly upon the spirit of the recipient; and would, if circumstances allowed, gladly extend relief from behind a veil which hides the giver, and does every thing to prevent the sense of obligation from being either painful or oppressive.

Kindness is opposed to the *benevolence of partiality, prejudice and caprice*. There are not a few who are lavish in their fondness towards persons of their own party, or upon those who happen to be their favorites for the time; but for any beyond their own circle of partisans, or of their select friends, they have none of the charities of life—their benevolent regards are purely sectarian, or absolutely capricious. But kindness is a clear perennial spring, rising up from a heart replete with universal philanthropy, holding on its way unimpeded by prejudices or partialities, and distributing its benefits alike upon all that it meets with in its course.

Having thus contrasted kindness with some characteristics to which it is opposed, let us now consider the manner in which it acts.

It expresses itself in *words* that are calculated to please. As not only our words, but the tones of our voice, are indicative of our thoughts and feelings, it is of consequence for us to be careful, both in *what* we say, and *how* we say it. Half the quarrels which disturb the peace of society arise from unkind words, and not a few from unkind tones. We should sedulously avoid a sour, morose, chiding mode of speech, and adopt a soothing, conciliatory, and affectionate style of address. A surly tone is calculated to wound or offend, and love, which carries the law of kindness upon its lips, will consequently avoid it. A snappish, petulant, scolding address, is in the highest degree repulsive and dissonant in the intercourse of society. We may not have, it is true, the music of sound in our speech, but it is our own fault if we have not the music of love. We need not employ grimace, fawning sycophancy, hollow and unmeaning compliment, but we may be courteous, and affectionate; and we ought to “let our speech be seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers.” Every word, and every modulation of the voice, that is likely to offend, should be studiously avoided, and *will* be avoided by kindness, which extends, also, to *actions*. It is anxious not to give offence by any thing which it does: it is most delicately tender in reference to the feelings of its object, and would not unnecessarily crush the wing of an insect, much less inflict a wound upon a rational mind. There are persons who, in a spirit of selfish independence, care not whom they please, or whom they offend; but love is as anxious not to offend, as it is solicitous about its own gratification: its neighbor's comfort is as dear to it as its own; it calculates, deliberates, weighs the tendency of actions, and, when by incaution, or pure misfortune, it has occasioned distress, it hastens, by every practicable means, to heal the wound.

Kindness not only abstains from actual injury, but it is *active in conferring benefits*—watches for an opportunity to please—is ever ready to afford its assistance when appealed to,—and is not satisfied unless it can do something to increase the general stock of comfort. It accommodates itself to their habits, partialities, or prejudices; adapts itself, in things indifferent and lawful, to their modes of acting, and does not wantonly oppose their predilections, when such resistance would occasion them distress. A stiff, uncompromising behavior, which consults nothing but its own humor, and which will not sacrifice the least punctilio of its own habits, to give pleasure, has not a particle of beneficence about it. Such an individual is like a person in a crowd, who *will* walk with his arms stretched out, or with annoying weapons in his hand.

It extends, of course, to *little things*, as well as to great ones. The happiness or misery of life does not consist so much in the transport of joy, or the anguish of affliction, as in feelings of an inferior kind—which, though less violent, are more frequent than those strong emotions. Hence it is in our power to make others miserable in life; not, perhaps, by deeds of cruelty or injustice, which we dare not, or cannot commit, as by indulging in unaccommodating dispositions towards them—by vexing them with acts of unkindness, which will neither blast our reputation, nor put in peril our property, liberty or life: and it is also in our power to make them happy, not so much by signal and material services, which are seldom called for at our hands, as by the inferior offices of benevolence. The daily, and almost hourly reciprocity of little acts of good or ill will, which we have an opportunity of performing, go a great way to the making up of good or bad neighborhood. There are those who, in the greater expressions of Christian mercy, are really humane; whose benevolence at the same time has not learned to stoop to little things: they are compassionate, but they want kindness: they would relieve a starving beggar, but they would not put themselves in ever so small a degree out of their way, to accommodate, in trivial matters, a near neighbor.

Kindness is *universal in its objects*. We have known individuals who could never do enough for some objects of their regard, but who are by no means persons of diffusive kindness; and, perhaps, if we examine, we shall find that their benevolence has a great mixture of selfishness in it, for it is exercised only towards those from whom they expect an ample return. It is the kindness of barter, not of charity: it is so much of their comfort put out at interest, not given away to the needy; they either have had, or expect to have, value received for all they do. But love is universal in its aspect; it is ever ready to do a kind office for any one that either solicits or needs its assistance. Its language is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." It has a kind look, word, and act, for every body. Nor are its enemies denied the assistance of its efforts. Such is the generous spirit of the Christian religion, as appears from the passages quoted in a preceding chapter. Such is the refined, the sublime morality of the New Testament. Yes, these are the principles on which kindness acts: it extends its beneficence to the very man that has treated it with contumely and scorn—with cruelty, insult, and oppression. This is its duty and its inclination. In imitation of the dying Saviour, who gave his last prayer to his murderers, it says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

What a fascinating character is the man of distinguished kindness! he is invested with indescribable loveliness: he may not have the glory in which the patriot, the hero, or the martyr is enshrined; but

he is adorned in no common degree with the beauties of holiness. He carries about with him the majesty of goodness, if not the dominion of greatness. The light of his countenance is the warm sunshine, to which the spirits of grief repair from their dark retreats, to bask in its glow; and his gentle words are like soft melody to chase away the evil thoughts from the bosom of melancholy, and to hush to peace the troubled reflections of the distempered mind. As he moves along his career, distributing the unexpensive but efficient expressions of his regards, it is amidst the blessings of those that are ready to perish, and the notes of the widow's heart, which he has turned to joy. When he comes unexpectedly into the company of his friends, every countenance puts on the appearance of complacency, and it appears as if a good genius had come among them to bless the party; as he looks round on the circle, with a smile of beneficence that has found an abiding place upon his brow, he presents the brightest resemblance to be found in our selfish world, of the entrance of the Saviour among his disciples, when he said, "Peace be unto you!" and breathed upon them the Holy Ghost. Although he neither seeks nor wishes an equivalent, in return for his many acts of benevolence, his gentle spirit receives back, in a full tide, the streams of consolation which have ebbed from his own heart to fill the empty channels of his neighbor's happiness. Who can be unkind to *him*, who is kind to all? What heart is so hard, what mind is so cruel, what spirit is so diabolical, as to wound him, who never appears among his race but as a ministering angel? There is a magic in his tears, to melt to sympathy the stubborn soul of cruelty itself, which has a tear for no one else; and no less a magic in his smiles, so far to relax and soften the hard features of envy, as to reflect for a moment the sunshine of his joy.—While he lives, every man is his admirer; and when he dies, every man is his mourner: while he is on earth, his name has a home in every heart; and when he is gone, he has a monument in every memory:—and this is the description of his character—the record of his praise: LOVE IS KIND!

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CONTENTMENT OF LOVE.

"*Charity envieth not.*"

ENVY is that passion, which causes us to feel uneasiness at the sight of another's possessions or happiness, and which makes us dislike him on that account. Of all the base passions, this is the basest. It is unmingled malignity, the very worst and bitterest dregs of human depravity; the most direct contrariety of love. Envy is either general or special in its objects. It often exists in the mind to such an extent, that its subjects seem almost instinctively opposed to excellence and to happiness, wherever they see them, or whenever they hear of them. They may not regard the individuals on whom their envious glance is fixed in the light of competitors or rivals; they may have nothing to hope from their depression—nothing to fear from their elevation; but it is enough to awaken their uneasiness and dislike, to know that they are in some respects superior. They cannot bear to see excellence or happiness in any one, or ever to hear the language of commendation or praise. They would beggar the universe to enrich themselves, and monopolize all possessions, and all admiration; they would be alone in the world, as the sole occupants of every thing valuable, and can endure neither a superior nor an equal. This, it must be allowed, is a maturity to which envy rarely attains,



compared with its more *special* and limited operation.

The OBJECTS of envy are commonly such as these.

1. *Persons who are nearly on our own level.* Individuals who are either much above us in station, or much below us, are not so likely to excite uneasiness and dislike, as those who are of our own standing, or approaching to it. The tradesman envies not the nobleman, but some fellow-tradesman: the laurels and fame of the hero are not envied by the common soldier, but by some officer of his own rank.

2. Those who though much above us, *occupy a station from which we have been cast down*, are likely to be regarded by us with an evil eye, and to draw forth our dislike.

3. *Competitors*, but especially some single rival for wealth, or fame, or any valuable possession, is a powerful temptation to this sin. It is extremely difficult to witness their success and superiority, and feel nothing of envy towards them.

It is evident, that persons *descending in life* are much exposed to this vice: and, perhaps, those still more so, who are *candidates for popular applause*, whether they be literary, scientific, military, or professional men. "Vanity, or a thirst after applause, is the most unsocial and envious of the passions, avarice itself not excepted. The reason is plain. Property is a kind of good, which may be more easily attained, and is capable of more minute subdivision, than fame. In the pursuit of wealth, men are led, by an attention to their own interest, to promote the welfare of each other: their advantages are reciprocal; the benefits which each is anxious to acquire for himself, he reaps in the greatest abundance from the union of society. The pursuits of vanity are quite contrary. The portion of time and attention mankind are willing to spare from their avocations and pleasures, to devote to the admiration of each other, is so small, that every successful adventurer is felt to have impaired the common stock. The success of one, is the disappointment of multitudes: for though there be many rich, many virtuous, many wise men, fame must necessarily be the portion of but few. Hence every vain man regarding his competitor as his rival, is strongly tempted to rejoice in his miscarriage, and to repine at his success.

There is not any kind of superiority, however low in its nature, or obscure in situation, which is not found to be sufficient to call forth the ill-will and hatred of some inferior or disappointed spectator. Children and rustics, as well as philosophers, warriors, and princes, are subject to its influence. Like the venomous spider, it weaves its web, and directs its deadly glance, in the cottages of poverty, the mansions of affluence, and the halls of science. It is the epidemic of the human race, the most common operation of human depravity. The apostle seems to give it as a general description of human nature, while unrenewed by divine grace. "Living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." The whole Gentile world, before the coming of Christ, is described as having been "full of envy." "Envyings" bear a high place among the works of the flesh; and on the converts from paganism, the churches of believers, there was no one evil of which the prohibition was more frequently, or more earnestly enjoined, than this: and the apostle James tells us, that it is still partially inherent in every man—"the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy."

But let us now contemplate its HATEFUL NATURE. It is a vice of the utmost deformity and heinousness. To feel uneasiness at another's happiness, or excellence, and to dislike him on that account, is a sin that needs no analysis to prove its deadly nature

—no dissection, to expose its corruption; it presents at once, to the most superficial observer, a frightful and disgusting appearance—a kind of leprous surface. It stands directly opposed to the nature of God, whose love delights in excellence and in happiness, and whose grace produces both; and by whom this sin must be regarded with infinite loathing and abhorrence.

It is a secret murmuring against the appointments of heaven—an incessant quarrel with Providence—an accusation preferred against the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the divine administration. As it is unlike God, so it is the image of Satan—being the disposition, united with pride, which cast down the apostate angels from their seats in heaven, and which fills and fires their bosoms in the bottomless pit; it is perfectly the state of hell, and unceasingly the passion of devils, who despair for themselves, and envy the happiness of men and angels, yet cannot rejoice either in the good or the evil they witness, although they endeavor to hinder the good, and promote the evil, with all the restlessness of malice, and the devices of a mighty understanding. It is a parent crime, and its progeny are as mischievous and as deformed as itself: for malice, hatred, falsehood, slander, are its ordinary brood; and not unfrequently murder: for when carried to excess, there is scarcely an injury within its reach which it would not inflict upon its object. It cannot even offer the excuses for itself which many vices sometimes bring forward: anger pleads the provocation it has received; but envy has received no offence, except the well-being of another be an insult; lust and intemperance plead the gratification which their objects yield, and robbery holds up its gain; but envy gains nothing but misery, and converts the happiness, of which it is the witness, into wormwood and gall for its own cup, and transvenoms the honey of another man's comfort into the poison of asps for its own bosom: it is a source of eternal vexation—an instrument of self-torment—a rottenness in the bones—a burning ulceration of the soul—a crime, which, partaking of the guilt, partakes as largely of the misery of hell.

Such is envy; but who can describe it accurately, or do it justice? If we look for it as embodied in living characters, we shall find it in Cain, the proto-murderer, who slew his brother at the instigation of this vice. We shall find it in the dark, and gloomy, and revengeful spirit of Saul, who, under the influence of envy, plotted for years the slaughter of David. We shall find it in the king of Israel, when he pined for the vineyard of Naboth, and shed his blood to gain it. Yea, it was envy that perpetrated that most atrocious crime, ever planned in hell or executed on earth, on which the sun refused to look, and at which nature gave signs of abhorrence by the rending of the rocks; I mean the crucifixion of Christ: for the evangelist tells us, that for envy, the Jews delivered our Lord.

Bishop Hall has given us a very striking portraiture of the envious man, which I shall here introduce:—"He feeds on other's evils; and hath no disease but his neighbor's welfare: whatsoever God does for him, he cannot be happy with company; and if he were put to choose whether he would rather have equals in a common felicity, or superiors in misery, he would demur upon the election. His eye casts out too much, and never returns home, but to make comparisons with another's good. He is an ill prizer of foreign commodity—worse of his own; for that he rates too high—this undervalues. You shall have him ever inquiring into the estates of his equals and betters, wherein he is not more desirous to hear all, than loath to hear any thing over good; and if just report relate aught better than he would, he redoubles the ques-

tion, as being hard to believe what he likes not; and hopes yet, if that be averred again to his grief, that there is somewhat concealed in the relation, which, if it were known, would argue the commended party miserable, and blemish him with secret shame. He is ready to quarrel with God, because the next field is fairer grown; and angrily calculates his cost, and time, and tillage. Whom he dares not openly backbite, nor wound with a direct censure, he strikes smoothly with an over cold praise; and when he sees that he must either maliciously oppugn the just praise of another, (which were unsafe,) or approve it by assent, he yieldeth; but shows, withal, that his means were such, both by nature and education, that he could not, without much neglect, be less commendable: so his happiness shall be made the color of detraction. When a wholesome law is propounded, he crosseth it either by open or close opposition—not for any incommmodity or inexpediency, but because it proceedeth from any mouth but his own; and it must be a case rarely plausible that will not admit some probable contradiction. When his equal should rise to honor, he striveth against it unseen, and rather with much cost suborneth great adversaries; and when he sees his resistance vain, he can give a hollow gratulation in pretence; but in secret disparageth that advancement: either the man is unfit for the place, or the place for the man; or, if fit, yet less gainful, or more common than opinion: whereto he adds, that himself might have had the same dignity upon better terms, and refused it. He is witty in devising suggestions to bring his rival out of love into suspicion; if he be courteous, he is seditiously popular; if bountiful, he binds over his clients to faction; if successful in war, he is dangerous in peace; if wealthy, he lays up for a day; if powerful, nothing wants but opportunity for rebellion; his submission is ambitious hypocrisy; his religion, politic insinuation;—no action is safe from an envious construction. When he receives a good report of him whom he emulates, he saith, Fame is partial, and covers mischiefs; and pleaseth himself with hope to find it false: and if ill will hath dispersed a more spiteful narration, he lays hold on that against all witnesses, and broacheth that rumor for truth, because worst; and when he sees him perfectly miserable, he can at once pity him and rejoice. What himself cannot do, others shall not: he hath gained well, if he have hindered the success of what he would have done and could not. He conceals his best skill, not so as it may not be known that he knows it, but so as it may not be learned, because he would have the world miss him. He attained to a sovereign medicine by the secret legacy of a dying empiric, whereof he will leave no heir, lest the praise should be divided. Finally, he is an enemy to God's favors, if they fall beside himself; the best nurse of ill fame; a man of the worst diet, for he consumes himself, and delights in pining; a thorn-hedge covered with nettles; a peevish interpreter of good things; and no other than a lean and pale carcass quickened with a fiend."

How hateful, then, is this crime; and although we may not be in danger of carrying it to the excess here stated, yet we should ever strive against its least and lowest degrees. The means of opposing and mortifying it are many.

Let us *very seriously meditate on its evil nature*. A steady contemplation of its deformity and demon-like countenance, is calculated to excite disgust, and to produce abhorrence. Many evils, and this among the number, are too much indulged, because they are too little contemplated. The more we meditate upon the heinousness of envy, the more we shall be convinced of the utter unsuitableness of such a tem-

per as this to be the inmate of a Christian's bosom: it is like a fiend inhabiting the temple of the Lord.

We must next *form a deliberate resolution for its mortification*: we must stand prepared to take the greatest pains, to maintain the most determined efforts, for the riddance of our hearts from so hateful a disposition. Let us next consider, that the circumstances which excite our envy are among the arrangements of a wise Providence; and that to dislike another on account of his excellence, or happiness, is a crime of no less magnitude than a wish to oppose and subvert the dispensations of heaven.—Let us remember, that if others have more than ourselves, we have infinitely more than we deserve; a deliberate and frequent consideration of our numerous and aggravated sins, with our deliverance from their consequences, together with a survey of our mercies, and hopes, as Christians, would very powerfully help us in the great business of mortifying envy; for the chief difference between man and man, as to real happiness, lies in spiritual distinctions; and if we have these, the absence of any thing else is matter of little consequence. It may not be amiss, also, to consider, how comparatively small is the amount of happiness derived by the object of our envy, from those possessions on the ground of which we dislike him; and how soon, could we transfer them to ourselves, they would cease to impart any strong gratification to us. We always act under a delusion, when we indulge this hateful passion: its objects are seen through a magnifying medium of very high power. The circumstances which excite our envy, have their attendant evils; evils which, though concealed from general observation, are well known to the possessor of them. We should labor to be content with such things as we have: contentment is the secret of happiness, whether we have much or little. The man who makes up his mind to enjoy what he has, is quite as happy as he who possesses twice as much.

But still the great thing is, to endeavor, by God's gracious help, *to increase in love*. Our envy will then as certainly diminish, as darkness retires before the entrance of light, or cold before the power of heat. Love and envy are the very antipodes of each other; the former delights in the happiness of others, the latter is made miserable by it. Let us endeavor to cultivate this disposition, and to delight in witnessing and diffusing blessedness. This is what the apostle meant, when he said, "Rejoice with those that do rejoice." What a beautifying, and even sublime, temper is that, which leads its possessor to find consolation, amidst its own straits, privations, and difficulties, in contemplating the possessions and the comforts of those around him! What relief would such elevated virtue bring to the mourner, when he could turn his own darkened orb toward the illumination of his neighbor's prosperity! Happy the man who can thus borrow the joys of others when he has none, or few, of his own; and from the wilderness of his own situation, enjoy the beautiful prospect of his friend's domain. Difficult and rare as such a temper is, it is that which is the subject of the apostle's description, in the chapter we are considering, and which it is the duty of every Christian to cultivate. Hard, indeed, is the saying, and few there are who can bear it, but it is assuredly the lesson which Christ teaches his disciples, and which those disciples must all endeavor to learn. Much may be done by effort. Let us determine, by God's help, to acquire it; let us make the attempt, and let us only persevere, notwithstanding many defeats and many discouragements, and it is astonishing what may be done. But this goeth not forth but by fasting and prayer. Love cannot be cultivated, nor envy destroyed, in our hearts, but by



the power of the Holy Spirit. We may as well try to pull up by the roots the oak of a century's growth, or overturn a mountain, by our own strength, as to eradicate the vice of envy from our hearts, without the aid of God's own Spirit; that aid is promised to fervent and persevering prayer, and if we have it not, the fault is our own.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HUMILITY OF LOVE.

*"Charity is not puffed up—vaunteth not itself."*

THE apostle's meaning, in this part of his description, evidently is, that love has not a high and overweening conceit of its own possessions and acquirements, and does not ostentatiously boast of what it is, has done, can do, or intends to do. It is opposed to pride and vanity, and is connected with true humility.

Pride signifies such an exalted idea of ourselves, as leads to self-esteem, and to contempt of others. It is self-admiration—self-doating. It differs from vanity thus: pride causes us to value ourselves; vanity makes us anxious for applause. Pride renders a man odious; vanity makes him ridiculous. Love is equally opposed to both.

Pride is the sin which laid the moral universe in ruins. It was this that impelled Satan and his confederates to a mad "defiance of the Omnipotent to arms," for which they were driven from heaven, and taught, by their better experience, that "God resisteth the proud." Banished from the world of celestials, pride alighted on our globe, in its way to hell, and brought destruction in its train. Propagated from our common and fallen parent with our species, it is the original sin—the inherent corruption of our nature. It spreads over humanity, with the contagious violence, the loathsome appearance of a moral leprosy, raging alike through the palace and the cottage, and infecting equally the prince and the peasant.

The grounds of pride are various: whatever constitutes a distinction between man and man, is the occasion of this hateful disposition. It is a vice that does not dwell exclusively in kings' houses, wear only soft raiment, and feed every day upon titles, fame, or affluence: it accommodates itself to our circumstances, and adapts itself to our distinctions, of whatever kind they be. The usual grounds of pride are the following:

*Wealth.* Some value themselves on account of their fortune, look down with contempt on those below them, and exact obsequiousness towards themselves, and deference for their opinions, according to the thousands of money or of acres which they possess. Others are proud of their *talents*, either natural or acquired. The brilliancy of their genius, the extent of their learning, the splendor of their imagination, the acuteness of their understanding, their power to argue, or declaim, form the object of self-esteem, and the reasons of that disdain which they pour upon all who are inferior to them in mental endowments. But these things are not so common in the church of God, as those which we now mention.

*Ecclesiastical connections* form, in many cases, the occasion of pride. This was exemplified in the Jews, who boasted that they were the children of Abraham, and worshipped in the temple of the Lord. Their self-admiration, as the members of the only true church, and as the covenant people of God, was insufferably disgusting. In this feature of their character, they are too often imitated in modern times. Whatever leads us to think highly

of ourselves in matters of religion, and to despise others, whether it be the distinctions of earthly greatness, and practice of religious duties, or the independence of our mode of thinking, is opposed to the spirit of Christian charity.

*Superior light on the subject of revealed truth* is no unusual occasion of pride. The Arminian Pharisee dwells with fondness on the goodness of his heart; the Antinomian, with equal haughtiness, values himself on the clearness of his head; and the Socinian, as far from humility as either of them, is inflated with a conceit of the strength of his reason, and its elevation above vulgar prejudices: while not a few moderate Calvinists regard with complacency their sagacity in discovering the happy medium.—As men are more proud of their understanding than of their disposition, it is very probable that religious opinions are more frequently the cause of conceit and self-importance, than any thing else which could be mentioned. "It is knowledge," says the apostle, "that puffeth up." We are the men, and wisdom will die with us, is the temper of multitudes.

*Religious gifts* are sometimes the ground of self-admiration. Fluency and fervor in extempore prayer, ability to converse on doctrinal subjects, especially if accompanied by a ready utterance in public, have all, through the influence of Satan and the depravity of our nature, led to the disposition we are now condemning. None are in more danger of this than the ministers of religion: it is the besetting sin of their office. There is no one gift which offers so strong a temptation both to vanity and to pride, as that of public speaking. If the orator really excel and is successful, he is the immediate spectator of his success, and has not even to wait till he has finished his discourse; for although the decorum of public worship will not allow of *audible* tokens of applause, it does of *visible* ones: the look of interest, the tear of penitence, or of sympathy, the smile of joy, the deep impression on the mind, the death-like stillness, cannot be concealed: all seems like a tribute of admiration to the presiding spirit of the scene; and then the applause which is conveyed to his ear, after all the silent plaudits which have reached his eye, is equally calculated to puff him up with pride. No men are more in danger of this sin, than the ministers of the gospel: none should watch more sleeplessly against it.

*Deep religious experience* has often been followed by the same effect, in those cases where it has been remarkably enjoyed. The methods of divine grace, though marked by a uniformity sufficient to preserve that likeness of character, which is essential to the unity of the spirit and the sympathies of the church, are still distinguished by a vast variety of minor peculiarities. The convictions of sin in some minds are deeper, the apprehensions of Divine wrath are more appalling, the transition from the poignant compunction of repentance bordering on despair, to joy and peace in believing, more slow and more awful, the subsequent repose more settled, and the joy more unmingled with the gloom of distressing fears, than is experienced by the generality of their brethren. Such persons are looked up to as professors of religion, whose religious history has been remarkable, as vessels of mercy on which the hand of the Lord has bestowed peculiar pains, and which are eminently fitted for the master's use. They are regarded as having a peculiar sanctity about them; and hence they are in danger of falling under the temptation to which they are exposed, and of being proud of their experience. They look down from what they suppose to be their lofty elevation, if not with disdain yet with suspicion, or with pity upon those whose way has not been in their track. Their seasons of elevated communion

with God, of holy enlargement of soul, are sometimes followed with this tendency. Paul was never more in danger of losing his humility, than when he was just returned from gazing upon the celestial throne.

*Zeal*, whether it be felt in the cause of humanity or of piety, has frequently produced pride. This was strikingly illustrated in the case of the Pharisee: "God, I thank thee," said this inflated devotee, "that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week—I give tithes of all that I possess!" Where a natural liberality of mind, or religious principle, has led men to lavish their property, or their influence, or their time, upon benevolent institutions, they have too often returned from the scene of public activity, to indulge in private and personal admiration. They have read with peculiar delight the reports in which their munificence is recorded, and have assigned to themselves a high place in the roll of public benefactors.

On all these grounds does pride exalt itself; but love is no less opposed to *vanity* than it is to pride—"it vaunteth not itself." It does not boast of, or ostentatiously display, its possessions, acquirements, or operations. A disposition to boast, and to attract attention, is a common foible. We see this among the people of the world, in reference to their property, their learning, their connections, their influence. They are afraid the public should underrate them; forgetting that they pay a poor compliment to their importance, when they thus think it necessary to proclaim it in order to its being known. If indeed they are what they wish to make us believe they are, the fact would be obvious without this method of publishing it in every company. Puffing is always suspicious, or superfluous; for real greatness no more needs a crier than the sun.

But it is more particularly in reference to religious matters that this observation of the apostle applies. We should not appear eager to display our gifts, nor should we vaunt of *our religious experience*. The manner in which some good but weak people talk of their pious conflicts, is indeed intolerably offensive. No matter who is present, pious or profane, scorner or believer, they parade all their seasons of despondency or of rapture; they tell you how they struggled with the great enemy of souls, and overcome him; how they wrestled with God, and had power to prevail; and that you may have as exalted an opinion of their humility, as of their enjoyment, they tell you in the utter violation of all propriety, and almost of decency, what temptations they have encountered—what hair-breadth escapes they have had from the commission of sin. Their motive is obvious; all this vaunting is to impress you with the idea that they are no ordinary Christians. Who can wonder that all religious conversation should have been branded with the epithets of whining cant and disgusting hypocrisy, when the injudicious and nauseating effusions of such talkers are regarded as a fair sample of it?

Too common is it to make the *externals of religion* the subject of vain-glorious boasting. How long can you be in the company of some Christians without hearing of their splendid place of worship, and its vast superiority over all the rest in the town? They establish the most insulting and degrading comparisons between their minister and his brethren in the neighborhood: none so eloquent, none so able, none so successful, as he. Notwithstanding your attachment to the pastor under whose ministry you sit with pleasure and profit, you are condescended to hear him dishonored and degraded by one of these gasconading professors, who is as destitute of good manners as he is of good feeling.

And what a propensity is there in the present age, to display, and parade, and boasting, in reference to *religious zeal*! This is one of the temptations of the day in which we live, and a compliance with the temptation one of its vices. We have at length arrived at an era of the Christian church, when all the denominations into which it is divided, and all the congregations into which it is subdivided, have their public religious institutions for the diffusion of divine truth. These institutions cannot be supported without property; and the property that is contributed for their support, must be matter of general notoriety. Like the tributary streams flowing into a great river, or like great rivers flowing into the sea, the contributions of associated congregations or communities, make up the general fund; but, unlike the tributary streams which flow silently to form the mighty mass of waters, without requiring the ocean to publish to the universe the amount of each separate quota, the offerings of the different religious bodies, must be announced, to the uttermost farthing, before the world. This perhaps, is necessary, that the contributors may know that their bounty has not been stopped and swallowed up in its course, but has reached its destined receptacle: and such is the weakness of our principles, and the strength of our imperfections, that this publicity to a certain extent, seems necessary to stimulate our languid zeal. But it has given opportunity, and that opportunity has been eagerly embraced, to establish a system of unhallowed vanity between the different denominations and the various congregations into which the Christian church is divided. Who can have heard the speeches, read the reports, and witnessed the proceedings of many of our public meetings, convened for the support of missionary societies, without being grieved at the strange fire, and diseased offerings, which have been brought to the altar of the Lord? The object of the meeting was good, for it was the destruction of an idolatry as insulting to Jehovah as that which Jehu destroyed; but like the king of Israel, hundreds of voices exclaimed in concert, "Come, see our zeal for the Lord!" The image of jealousy was lifted up in the temple of Jehovah; adulatory speakers chanted its praises, in compliments upon the liberality of the worshippers; the multitude responded in shouts of applause to the tribute paid to their zeal; the praise of God was drowned amidst the praise of men; and the crowd dispersed, in love with the cause, it is true, but more for their own sakes, than for the sake of God, or of the heathen world.

Difficult indeed it is, with such hearts as ours, to do any thing entirely pure from all admixture of a sinful nature; but when we take pains to make our zeal known; when we employ effort to draw public attention upon us; when we wish and design to make ourselves talked of as a most extraordinary, liberal, and active people; when we listen for praises, and are disappointed if they do not come in the measure we expected, and feast upon them if they are presented; when we look with envy on those who have outstripped us, and find no pleasure in any future efforts, because we cannot be first; when we look with jealousy on those who are approaching our level, and feel a new stimulus, not from a fresh perception of the excellence of the object, but from a fear that we shall be eclipsed in public estimation; when we talk of our fellow workers, or to them, with disdain of their efforts, and with arrogant ostentation of our own;—then, indeed, have we employed the cause only as a pedestal on which to exalt ourselves; in pulling down one kind of idolatry, we have set up another, and rendered our contributions nothing better than a costly sacrifice to our own vanity. All this is a



want of that Christian love which "vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up."

True zeal is modest and retiring; it is not like the scentless sunflower, which spreads its gaudy petals to the light of heaven, and turns its face to the orb of day through his course, as if determined to be seen; but like the modest violet, it hides itself in the bank, and sends forth its fragrance from its deep retirement. It employs no trumpeter, it unfurls no banner, like the hypocrite; but while conferring the most substantial benefits, it would, if it were possible, be like the angels who, while ministering to the heirs of salvation, are unseen and unknown, by the objects of their benevolent attention.

Observe the manner in which love operates to the destruction of this evil. Love, as we have already had frequent occasion to remark, is a desire to promote the happiness of those around us; but proud and vain persons tend materially to impair this happiness. They generally excite disgust, frequently offer insult, and sometimes inflict pain.—Their object is to impress you with a degrading sense of inferiority, and thus to wound and mortify your feelings. Caring little for your peace, they pursue a career of contumely and scorn, dreaded by the weak and despised by the wise. It is impossible to be happy in their society; for if you oppose them, you are insulted—if you submit to them, you are degraded.

Love is essentially and unalterably attended with *humility*; humility is the garment with which it is clothed, its inseparable and invariable costume. By humility, we do not intend the servility which crouches, or the meanness that creeps, or the sycophancy which fawns; but a disposition to think lowly of our attainments, a tendency to dwell upon our defects, rather than our excellences, an apprehension of our inferiority compared with those around us, with what we ought to be, and what we might be. It is always attended with that modest deportment, which neither boasts of itself, nor seeks to depreciate any one; humility is the inward feeling of lowliness—modesty is the outward expression of it; humility leads a man to feel that he deserves little—modesty leads him to demand little.

"The ancient sages, amidst all their panegyrics upon virtue, and inquiries into the elements of moral excellence, not only valued humility at an exceedingly low estimate, but reckoned it a quality so contemptible, as to neutralize the other properties which went, in their estimation, to the composition of a truly noble and exalted character. These sentiments have been adopted, in modern times, by the great majority both of the vulgar and of the philosophers, differing from their predecessors chiefly in this circumstance,—the more complete absence of that humility and modesty which would have adorned them, and in their determined and obstinate rejection of that true standard of character, after which the ancients so eagerly sought. By the touchstone which Christianity applies to the human character, it is found that pride and independence, which the world falsely dignifies with the epithet *honorable*, are really base alloy; and that of every character formed upon proper principles, and possessed of genuine worth, humility is at once a distinguishing feature and the richest ornament. And on this subject, as on every other, Christianity accords with the sentiments of right reason—that it is unquestionably the duty of every intelligent (especially every imperfect) creature to be humble; for they have nothing which they have not received, and are indebted, in every movement they make, to an agency infinitely superior to their own."

Now, as divine revelation is the only system which, either in ancient or in modern times, assigns to humility the rank of a virtue, or makes provision

for its cultivation this in an eminent degree does both. It assigns to it the highest place, and a sort of pre-eminence among the graces of piety; bestows upon it the greatest commendations, enforces it by the most powerful motives, encourages it by the richest promises, draws it into exercise by the most splendid examples, and represents it as the brightest jewel in the Christian's crown. Every thing in the word of God is calculated to humble us; the description which it contains of the divine character, combining an infinitude of greatness, goodness, and glory, compared with which the loftiest being is an insignificant atom, and the purest heart as depravity itself; the view it gives us of innumerable orders of created intelligences, all above man, in the date of their existence, the capacity of their minds, and the elevation of their virtue; the account it preserves of the intellectual and moral perfection of man in his pristine innocence, and the discovery which it thus furnishes of the height from which he has fallen, and the contrast it thus draws between his present and his former nature; the declaration it makes of the purity of the eternal law, and the immeasurable depth at which we are thus seen to lie beneath our obligations; the history it exhibits of the circumstances of man's fall, of the progress of his sin, and of the numberless and awful obliquities of his corruptions; the characteristics it affixes to his situation as a sinner, a rebel, an enemy of God, a child of wrath, an heir of perdition; the method it presents, by which he is redeemed from sin and hell,—a scheme which he neither invented, nor thought of, nor aided, but which is a plan of *grace*, from first to last, even the grace of God, manifested in and through the propitiation of Christ—a plan, which, in all its parts, and in all its bearings, seems expressly devised to exclude boasting; the means by which it asserts that the renovation and sanctification of the human heart are carried on, and its security to eternal life, established even by the effectual operation of a divine agency; the sovereignty which it proclaims as regulating the dispensation of celestial mercy; the example which it holds forth of the astonishing lowliness and self-abasement of others, so far superior to man in their mental and moral natures, such as the profound abasement of the angelic race, but especially the unparalleled humiliation of him, who, though he was in the form of God, was found in the form of a servant;—these considerations, which are all drawn from the Scriptures, supply incentives to humility, which demonstrate, upon Christian principles, that pride is the most unreasonable, as well as the most unrighteous thing in the universe. Pride is opposed, and humility is supported, by every possible view that we can take of divine revelation.—An acquaintance with these great principles of inspired truth, at least an experimental knowledge of them, will bring down the loftiness of men's looks, and silence the tongue of arrogant boasting. Surely, surely, he that is conversant with these things, will see little cause for self-valuation, as Mr. Hume calls pride, or for that self-publication, which is the essence of vanity.

While every true-hearted Christian is thankful that the Son of God stooped so low for his salvation, he will rejoice that his state of humiliation is past. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." The eclipse is over, the sun has resumed its original brightness, and the heavenly world is illuminated with his rays. That man, in whom was no form nor comeliness for which he should be desired, sits upon the throne of the universe, wearing a crown of immortal glory, and is adored by angels and by men. His humility has conducted to honor; his sorrow has terminated in unspeakable joy. "His glory is great in thy sal-

vation; honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him; for thou hast made him most blessed for ever; thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Similar shall be the result in the case of those who follow his steps, and tread the lowly path in which he has commanded them to walk. The crown of glory is reserved for the humble, but shame shall be the reward of the proud. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

There is no operation of Christian love more beautiful, none more scarce, than this; let professing Christians set themselves to work with their own proud hearts, and their own boasting tongues, remembering that they who sink the lowest in humility in this world, shall assuredly rise the highest in honor in the world to come.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DECORUM OF LOVE.

*"Charity doth not behave itself unseemly."*

A STATION for every person, and every person in his station; a time for every thing, and every thing in its time; a manner for every thing, and every thing in its manner;—is a compendious and admirable rule for human conduct, and seems to approach very nearly to the property of charity, which we are now to consider. There is some difficulty in ascertaining the precise idea which the apostle intended by the original term. Perhaps the most correct rendering is "indecorously," "unbecomingly," *i. e.* unsuitably to our sex, rank, age, or circumstances. Love leads a man to know his place and to keep it; and prevents all those deviations which by disarranging the order, disturb the comfort, of society. This is so general and comprehensive a rule, that it would admit of application to all the various distinctions which exist in life. It is absolutely universal, and binds with equal force the monarch and the peasant, and all the numerous intermediate ranks. It imposes a consistency between a man's station and his conduct viewed in the light of Christianity. It says to every man, "Consider your circumstances, and fulfil every just expectation to which they give rise." By the common consent of mankind, there is a certain line of conduct which belongs to every relation in life, and which cannot perhaps, be better expressed than by the word "becomingness;" and which may be called the symmetry of the body politic. We may select a few of the more prominent distinctions of society, and see how love preserves them without giving offence.

The distinction of *male and female* is to be supported by all propriety of conduct. On the part of the man, if he be single, all trifling with the affections, all familiarity with the person, all taking advantage of the weakness of the other sex, is explicitly forbidden; as is all neglect, oppression, and unkindness towards his wife, if he be married.—What a horrid unseemliness is it on the part of a husband, to become either the slave or the tyrant of his wife; either in pitiful weakness to abdicate the throne of domestic government, or to make her a crouching vassal, trembling in its shadow; and how disgusting a spectacle is it to see a husband abandoning the society of his wife for the company of other females, and flirting, though, perhaps, with no criminal intention, with either single or married women. On the other hand, how unseemly in married women, is a bold obtrusiveness of manner, an impudent forwardness of address, a clamorous and monopolizing train of conversation, an evident attempt to attract the attention of the other sex. Modesty is the brightest ornament of the female cha-

racter—its very becomingness. And women if married, should be stayers at home, and not gossips abroad; should look well to the ways of their household, and preside over its affairs in the meekness of wisdom; for domestic indolence and neglect is, in a wife and mother, most unseemly; nor is it less offensive to see the female head of a family usurping the seat of government, and reducing her husband to the rank of mere prime minister to the queen.—Women never act more unseemly than when they become busy meddling partizans, either in politics or church affairs. Nothing can be more offensive than to see a female busy-body running from house to house to raise a party, and to influence an ecclesiastical decision; forgetting that her place is home, and her duty to learn in silence of her husband.—Whatever admiration has been bestowed on the heroic females of Sparta, who fought by the side of their husbands, no such eulogy can be offered to ecclesiastical heroines, whose martial ardor leads them into the arena of church contentions. Christian charity would repress all this unmeet, indecorous zeal.

*Parents and guardians* will be guarded by love, if they yield to its influence, from all unbecoming conduct. Fathers will neither be tyrannical nor too indulgent; will neither govern their children as slaves, with a rod of iron, nor, relaxing all discipline, throw the reins into their hands: for how incongruous is tyranny with a relation that implies the tenderest affection; and how unseemly is a cessation of rule in one who is invested by heaven with a sacred authority. Becomingness on the part of children, requires the most prompt and willing obedience, the most genuine and manifest affection, the most respectful and humble demeanor, towards parents, with the most anxious, and ingenious endeavors to promote their happiness. Every thing approaching to improper familiarity, much more to pertness, most of all to refractoriness of manner, in a child towards a parent, is unbecoming in the last degree. In those cases where the high moral and intellectual qualities of parents are such as almost to *command* the exercise of filial piety from children, there is no difficulty in rendering it; but where these qualities are not possessed, there is greater danger of young persons forgetting what is due to the parental relation, and acting very improperly towards those who, whatever may be their faults are still their parents. It is excessively unbecoming to hear children of any age, however matured or advanced, exposing, perhaps ridiculing, their parents' infirmities, treating their opinions with scorn, and reproving or upbraiding them to their face. Let all young people recollect, that whatever may be the character of a parent,

"A mother is a mother still,  
The holiest thing alive."

In the distinction of *superiors and inferiors*, it is very easy to see what kind of conduct is seemly, and what is unsuitable. To the former it will prohibit all improper familiarity; for this generates contempt, and at the same time, all pride and hauteur, together with all insulting condescension. Inferiors are most tenderly alive, most keenly susceptible, to all real or supposed slights from those above them; and the feelings excited by such treatment are of the most painful kind. Pride is the most cruel of the passions, being utterly reckless of the wounds which it inflicts, the groans which it extorts, or the tears which it causes to flow. Even in its mildest exercise, by a look of scorn, by a word of insult, it often transfixes a barbed arrow in the breast of an inferior; while, by its deliberate and persevering scheme of mortification, it remorselessly crucifies



the object of its contempt. O how unbecoming to employ superiority only as an eminence from whence, as, with a sort of vulture ferocity, we might pounce with greater force on a victim below. Dignified affability is the becomingness of superiority, which, while it does not remove the line of distinction, does not render it painfully visible. Love will make us cautious not to wound the feelings of others by talking to them of our superiority, or by making them in any way feel it. On the part of inferiors, it will prevent all encroaching familiarity, all presuming upon manifested kindness, all attempt, or even wish, to level the distinctions of society, all rude, uncourteous, uncivil demeanor. Some persons seem to act as if religion removed the obligations to civility, declared war with courtesy, and involved a man in hostility with whatever things are lovely.—Incivility or rudeness, manifested by the poor to the rich, by servants to masters, or by the illiterate to the well-informed, is unfriendly to the peace and good order of society, and, therefore, contrary to Christian charity.

*Age and youth* are also distinctions requiring a suitable or becoming line of conduct. Levity, puerility, and folly, are among the qualities which would be indecorous in the former; while obtrusiveness, forwardness, loquaciousness, and pertinacity, would be unseemly in the latter: age, to be lovely, should treat youth with kindness and forbearance; while youth should treat age with reverence, respect, and deference.

These distinctions, when carried into the church, where they exist as well as in the world, should be maintained under the most powerful influence of the holy disposition which we are now illustrating. This will teach us with all candor and impartiality to judge of our station, and to adorn it with actions that are suitable to it. Any thing unbecoming is sure to give offence, and to produce discomfort.—Whether our rank be high or low, we cannot violate the rule which prescribes its duties without occasioning pain.

Men are united in society like the organs and limbs in the human body; and no one, in either case, can be put out of its place without producing uneasiness in the rest. The object of love is to keep all in their proper places, and thus to promote the well-being of the whole.

There is another sense which this expression will bear, and that is, love does not allow its possessor to act unworthy of his profession as a disciple of Christ. Consistency is beauty; and the want of which, whatever excellences may exist, is deformity. The brightest displays of moral worth in some things, is associated with obvious and great improprieties in others, lose all their attraction and power to edify or delight, and are the occasion of pain instead of pleasure to the spectator. The rule which the apostle has laid down is particularly worthy of the attention of us all: "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things." It is not enough for us to acknowledge, practically, the claims of truth, purity, and justice; but we must also meet and answer every expectation which our profession and our principles have raised. Whatever is generally esteemed to be lovely—whatever is usually spoken of as excellent—whatever it be to which by general consent we attach the idea of the fair, and the honorable, and the praiseworthy—that must a follower of Christ consider to be the matter of his duty. There is nothing good in itself, or advantageous to others—nothing that is calculated to edify by the power of example, or to bless in the way of direct energy and influence—nothing that is calculated to give pleasure, or to remove distress; but what is implied in the very nature of true piety.

Religion is the likeness of God in the soul of man and a Christian is truly an imitator of God: hence he is called "to walk worthy of God,"—to act as becometh one who professes to bear the divine image. Let any one contemplate the moral attributes of the Deity, and think what that man ought to be who professes to give to the world a living miniature representation of this infinitely glorious Being. On the ground of consistency, he should be blameless and harmless; a follower only of that which is good; holy in all manner of conversation and godliness; a beautiful specimen of whatsoever is noble, dignified, generous, and useful. The world take us at our word; they accept our profession as the rule of their expectation; and although they often look for too much, considering the present imperfect state of human nature, yet, to a certain extent, their demands are authorized by our own declarations.—What, in reason, may not be looked for from one who professes to have received the word of Christ, the temper of heaven, the impress of eternity, the nature of God? Hence, the least deviations from rectitude are apparent in those who say such things; the least specks of imperfection are conspicuous on so bright a ground; faults stand out in bold relief and obtrusive prominence, on such a basement.—Our profession invites the eye of scrutiny: we are not suffered to pass the ordeal of public opinion without the most rigid scrutiny; we are brought out from obscurity, and held up to be examined in the light of the sun. Failings, which would escape detection in others, are quickly discerned and loudly proclaimed in us: and it is, therefore, of immense consequence that we should take care what manner of persons we are. Without consistency, even our good will be evil spoken of: the least violation of this rule will attach suspicion to the most distinguished virtues, and bring discredit on the best of our actions.

A want of consistency is a violation of the law of love in various ways. *By exciting a prejudice against religion, it does harm to the souls of men:* it makes them satisfied with their state as unconverted persons, by leading them to consider every professor of a more serious regard to religion, as a hypocrite. It is very true that this is unfair; that it is attending more to exceptions than the general rule; that it is giving credence to little things, and suffering them to have an influence which are denied to the greater and more prevailing parts of their character: but as this is their way, it makes every departure from consistency on our part, not only sinful but injurious—not only guilty in the sight of God, but cruel towards man. The minor faults of Christians do more harm, in the way of hardening the hearts of sinners, than the greatest excesses of the openly wicked; for this reason, that nothing else is expected from the latter. Their conduct excites no surprise, produces no disappointment. We have not been sufficiently aware of this. We have confined our attention too exclusively to the avoidance of open immorality—we have not directed our solicitude enough to "the whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." To the question, "What do ye more than others?" we have thought it enough to answer, "We are more pure, more true, more devotional, more zealous," without being careful to be more dignified, more honorable, more generous, in all things. Little things have been forgotten in the contemplation of great ones: secret faults have been lost sight of in the abhorrence of presumptuous sins.

A want of becomingness is a violation of the law of love in another way: *it excites a prejudice against our brethren, and involves them in our failings.*—By such conduct we bring suspicion upon others, and thus subject them to much undeserved obloquy.

The world deals unfairly with us we admit, not only in making us thus answerable for the conduct of each other, but also in imputing only our failings; for however splendid and remarkable may be the Christian excellences that any of our number possess, however brilliant the example of a rare and eminent believer may be, they do not let his brightness fall upon the rest—he is alone in his glory, but sins are generally made imputable, and the shadow of one transgression is made to stretch, perhaps, over a whole community. What an argument is this with us all for consistency; for what cruelty is it to our brethren to involve them by our inconsistencies in unmerited reproach!

Besides, what a *grief of mind* is the *unworthiness of one member, to all who are associated with him in the fellowship of the gospel*. When a member of a church has acted unbecomingly, and caused the ways of godliness to be spoken ill of, what a wound has been inflicted on the body; for if one member suffer in his reputation, all the rest must, so far as their peace is concerned, suffer with him. This is one of the finest displays of Christian sympathy—one of the purest exhibitions of love,—of love to God, to Christ, to man, to holiness. The misconduct of their erring brother has occasioned no loss to them of worldly substance, or bodily ease, or social comfort; but it has dishonored Christ, has injured, in public estimation, the cause of religion, and this has touched the tenderest chord of the renewed heart. What affliction has sometimes been circulated through a whole society by the unbecoming behavior of a single member: the apostle has given a very striking proof of this, in his representation of the feelings of the Corinthian Church, after they had taken a right view of the delinquency of the incestuous person. "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what fervent indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" This is only a counter-part of what often happens now, and shows that unbecomingness is a most flagrant offence against the rule of Christian love.

Unbecomingness may be considered also not only in a general point of view, but as *having a reference to our conduct towards our brethren*, and may mean any thing unsuitable to, or out of character with, our profession as church members.

*Improper treatment of the Pastor*, is obviously a want of the decorum of love. If his office be disesteemed, and his Scriptural authority resisted; if attempts be made to lower him in the opinion of the church, and to deprive him of the rule with which he is invested by the Lord Jesus Christ; if his opinion is treated with disrespect, and his just influence over the feelings of his flock be undermined; if he be rudely and impertinently addressed; if he be unnecessarily opposed in his schemes for public or private usefulness; if his sermons be despised or neglected, and his ecclesiastical administration treated with suspicion or contempt; if his temporal support be scantily or grudgingly afforded; if his comfort be not carefully consulted and assiduously built up: there is a flagrant unbecomingness on the part of church members who are enjoined "to obey them that have the rule over them," "to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake," "and to hold such in reputation."

*Lust of power, and an ambitious desire of preponderating influence*, is manifestly unbecoming in one who acknowledges himself the member of a society where all are equals, and all are the servants of a master who has thus addressed his disciples—"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise

authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

A love of power seems almost inherent in the human bosom, and is an operation of that selfishness which enters so deeply into the essence of original sin. Nothing can be more opposed to love than this. Ambition, in its progress through its bustling and violent career, is the most unsocial and uncharitable passion that can exist. The furies are its allies, and it tramples down in its course all the charities and courtesies of life. When this disposition has taken full possession of the heart, there is no cruelty which it will hesitate to inflict, no desolation of which it will scruple to be the cause. The lesser exhibitions of this vice, and its more moderated energies, will still be attended with some proofs of its unsocial nature. Let a man once desire to be pre-eminent and predominant, as it respects influence or power, and he will not be very regardless of the feelings of those whom he desires to subjugate. It is much to be deplored, that the Christian church should ever be the field where rival candidates for power, struggle for superiority; yet how often has this been seen to be the case, not merely in the conclave where aspiring cardinals have put in motion all their artifice, and finesse, and duplicity, to gain the tiara; not merely amongst mitred prelates for a higher seat on the episcopal bench;—no; but amongst the lay brethren of the church. How anxious and restless have they sometimes appeared, to be leading men, influential members, the oracle of the minister, and the ruling elders of the church. They must not only be consulted in every thing, but consulted *first*. Every plan must emanate from them, or else be approved by them before it is submitted to the rest. The apostle has drawn their picture to the life, where he saith—"I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.—Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."\*—Such an individual must be a source of discomfort to his brethren in communion. There may be no competitor with him for the sceptre who regards him with envy, but the whole community are grieved and offended with his unlovely and encroaching disposition.

There are cases, it is admitted, in which age, experience, wisdom, benevolence, and activity, are so beautifully combined in an individual, as to place him, more by general consent, than by his own efforts, above all his brethren in influence. When he openeth his mouth in wisdom, all are silent; and the pastor hearkens with the rest in respectful deference to his opinion. No one would think of proposing any scheme till he had been consulted, and his disapproval, mildly expressed, would be thought a sufficient reason for laying it aside. He has power, but it has come to him without his seeking it, and it is employed not to exalt himself, but to benefit the church. His sway is the influence of love; and all that influence is employed by him, not to raise himself into a rival with his pastor for

\* 3 John 9, 10.—It is pretty evident to me that Diotrephes was a minister; but the features of his picture apply with equal force to an ambitious and aspiring layman, whose lust of power is still more censurable, as it has not even the basis of office to rest upon.



the upper seat in the church, but to support the authority and dignity of the pastoral office. Such men we have sometimes seen in our communities, and they have been a blessing to the people, and a comfort to the minister. If any individuals could have been found in the circle where they moved, so flip-pant and so forward as to treat them with the least degree of disrespect, every one besides would have been loud in the expression of their disapprobation of such an act of censurable indecorum.

Unseemliness in the conduct of a church member towards his brethren, applies to *all that is rude, unmannerly, or uncivil*. "No ill-bred man," says Dr. Adam Clarke, in his comments on this word, "or what is commonly termed rude or unmannerly, is a Christian"—certainly not a consistent one. "A man may have a natural bluntness, or be a clown, and yet there may be nothing *boorish*, or *hoggish* in his manner. I must apologize for using such words, but they best express the evil against which I wish both powerfully and successfully to declaim. I never wish to meet with those who *affect* to be called 'blunt honest men'; who feel themselves above all the forms of civility and respect, and care not how many they put to pain—how many they displease. But let me not be misunderstood: I do not contend for ridiculous ceremonies, and hollow compliments: there is surely a *medium*; and a sensible Christian man will not be long at a loss to find it out. Even *that* people who profess to be above all worldly forms, and are generally *stiff* enough, yet are rarely found to be rude, uncivil, or ill-bred." There is much good sense in these remarks, that deserves the attention of all professing Christians who have the credit of religion and the comfort of their brethren at heart. It is inconceivable what a great degree of unnecessary distress is occasioned by a disregard of this rule; and how many hearts are continually bleeding, from the wounds inflicted by incivility and rudeness. We should be careful to avoid this; for religion gives no man a release from the courtesies of life. In our *private intercourse* with our brethren, we should be anxious to give no offence. If we feel it our duty at any time, as we may, and ought to expostulate with a brother on the impropriety of his conduct, we should be most studiously cautious to abstain from all appearance of what is impertinently officious, or offensively blunt. Reproof, or even expostulation, is rarely palatable, even when administered with the honied sweetness of Christian kindness; but it is worm-wood and gall when mingled up with uncourteousness, and will generally be rejected with disdain and disgust. We must never think of acting the part of a reprover, till we have put on humility as a garment, and taken up the law of kindness in our lips.

Nothing is more likely to lead to incivility, than *repeated and vexatious interruptions*, when engaged in some interesting or important business, or required to comply with unreasonable requests. I have known cases in which, when application has been made for what the applicant thought to be a very reasonable matter, his request has been treated with such scorn, and denied with such abruptness and coarseness of manner, as to send him home with an arrow in his heart; when a few moments spent in explanation, or a denial given in kind and respectful language, would have completely satisfied him. It is admitted that it is somewhat trying, and it is a trial of very common occurrence in the present day, to be called from important occupations to listen to tales of woe, or read the statement of want, or answer the inquiries of ignorance: but still we must not be, ought not to be, rude. Sudden interruptions are apt to throw a man off his guard: he has scarcely time to call into exercise his principles, before his passions are up and busy. It is said of Mr. Ro-

maine, that he was one day called upon by a poor woman in distress of soul, for the purpose of gaining instruction and consolation. The good man was busy in his study; and on being informed that a poor woman wanted to converse with him below, exclaimed, with great incivility of manner, "Tell her I cannot attend to her." The humble applicant, who was within hearing of the reception her case had met with, said, "Ah, Sir! your master would not have treated thus a burdened penitent who came to him for mercy." "No, no," replied the good man, softened by an appeal which his heart could not resist, "he would not; come in, come in!"—Too, too often has the same petulant indecorum been manifested by others, without being accompanied by the same reparation: they have pierced the heart and left the wound to fester: the petitioners have carried away from their door their misery, not only unrelieved but greatly aggravated. But there is a peculiar sensitiveness on the subject of pecuniary contributions in some persons; to ask for them is an offence, which they pay back in insult.\* They are the Nabals of the church—if, indeed, the church could have a Nabal. What can be more unseemly than words which would disgrace a man, dropping,—dropping! no flowing in a stream,—from the lips of a professing Christian.

Unbecoming rudeness should be most sedulously avoided in our *public intercourse with the church*, and in our social circles, when meeting as brethren. Every thing of flat contradiction, of unwarrantable suspicion concerning the truth of a statement; all seeming contempt for the opinion of others; all attempts to interrupt or bear down, by clamor and vehemence, those with whom we may be engaged in discussion, should be very anxiously abstained from. It is truly painful to observe what an utter disregard for the feelings of their brethren is often manifested by some ardent sticklers for their own opinions and plans. But is not civility a Christian grace? Did not the apostle say, Be courteous?—Why should that which is considered by the world as a rich decoration of character, as softening and embellishing the intercourse of society, and as so

\* I must here specify the applications which are so frequent in the present day for the support of churches and public institutions. I am aware that the bells and knockers of some persons' doors are rarely silent long together, or their parlors and counting-houses rarely free from "beggars" a single hour of any day: I am also aware how trying it is to be called away from occupations of importance to attend to such cases; but even this does not justify a man for going into a passion at the sight of a red book and a black coat, and almost ordering the bearer off the premises as an impostor or vagrant. Let such persons ask, whether it is not misery enough to pace the streets of a city or large town, and at the end of a long day's weary pilgrimage, have to count up far more "negatives" than pounds? I have never known by experience, but I have heard by reports, the sorrows of beggars; and from regard to common humanity, as well as from a wish to save the ministerial character from degradation, I do most ardently desire some scheme, in place of the present mode of raising money from rich Christians, to help the necessities of their poorer brethren. But till that scheme shall be devised—and I am afraid the time is far distant which shall produce it,—let me plead for civility towards those who are still doomed to bear the yoke of bondage, "Forasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me." So says Christ of his brethren, and says it in reference both to benefits and neglects. When popular men travel from place to place, many houses are open to re-

important and necessary as to be placed under the guardianship of what is called the law of honor, and to be avenged, for the slightest violation of it, by the punishment of death;—why should this ever be considered as of little moment in the business of religion and the fellowship of the faithful? If rudeness be considered as a blemish upon talents, rank, fame, must it not be viewed also as a blot and deformity upon piety? Most certainly it is regarded as such by charity, whose anxiety to do whatever would give pleasure, and to avoid whatever would occasion distress, is not greater than its delicate perception of every thing that will contribute to this end.

We see in this subject the wonderful excellence of Christianity, as a code of morals, a rule of conduct, and a body of principles; for in addition to specific laws, intended to operate in the production of certain virtues, and the prevention of certain vices, it has general and comprehensive precepts, capable of universal application, of so plain a nature as to be understood by the dullest intellect, and possessing, at the same time, a kind of beauty, which gives them an interest in every heart; so that if in the specialities of Christian morals, properly so called, any case should be overlooked, or any situation should not be reached—any distinction between virtue and vice should be so minute as to be imperceptible—any delicacy of character so refined as not to be taken into the account—here is something to supply the defect, and render the law of God perfect for converting the soul. Love does not act unbecomingly; and who is so ignorant, if he would but consult his conscience, as not to know what would be thought by others unbecoming in himself?

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DISINTERESTEDNESS OF LOVE.

*"Charity seeketh not her own."*

If it were required to give a brief and summary description of man's original apostacy, we might

ceive them—many tables spread to entertain them. They meet with no rudeness, no unkindness. But this is for *their own* sakes. Our regard for Christ is proved by our conduct to the *least*, not to the *greatest*, of his brethren. And are the *great* ministers free from all blame in reference to their conduct towards their humble brethren? They are glad to entertain the popular favorites of the day—the men of name or talents; but how do they behave to the

*"Multi præterea quos fama obscura recondit?"*

Do they not order these to be sent away from their door without an audience, or keep them long waiting for an interview, and then dismiss the good man, sorrowfully exclaiming, "Am I not thy brother?"

Whilst we cheerfully accord the sentiments expressed in the above note, we still think there is need for the exercise of *Christian Charity* on the part of those, who make applications for aid. Forgetting that the benevolent are frequently called upon, and that they have a *right* to regulate their subscriptions; agents are strongly tempted to question the liberality of, and to impute wrong motives to those, who do not contribute as largely as was anticipated. Whilst there are causes justly claiming the aid of the benevolent in our cities; still there is a radical evil in the custom so prevalent in this day, of hastening to the cities to build churches in the country. As a general fact it will be found true, that communities are able by PROPER EFFORT AND DUE ECONOMY to provide suitable houses of worship for themselves.—AM. ED.

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say, that it was his departure from God—the fountain of his happiness, and the end of his existence—and retiring into himself as the ultimate end of all his actions: and if it were also asked, what is the essence of his sin, the sum of his moral depravity, we might say, to love himself supremely, to seek himself finally and exclusively, to make self, in one shape or another, the centre to which all his busy thoughts, anxious cares, and diligent pursuits constantly tend. Self-love is the most active and reigning principle in fallen nature; self is the great idol which mankind are naturally disposed to worship; and selfishness the grand interest to which they are devotedly attached. But the grace of God, when it renews the heart, so corrects and subdues this disposition, that it is no longer the ascendant of the mind; and plants in the human bosom the principle of benevolence—a principle which, as it leads us to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves, is the direct contrary of selfishness.

Believing that the perfection of virtue lies in disinterested love, it follows, that the nearer we approach to this state of mind, the nearer we come to sinless moral excellence. This is the temper of the innumerable company of angels—of the spirits of just men made perfect. It has been argued, that we take delight in the happiness of others, because their happiness increases our own: but the circumstance of our happiness being increased by promoting theirs, is itself a convincing proof of the existence and exercise of an antecedent good will towards them. Our felicity is raised by theirs. Why?—because we love them. Why am I made unhappy, by the sight of another's woe?—because I have good will to the subject of distress. It is true I am gratified by relieving him, and my comfort would be disturbed if I did not; but what is the origin of these feelings?—certainly a previous good will towards them. It is not affirmed, that all pity proceeds from holy love; but that where love does exist, and in the proportion in which it exists, it is disinterested, and is distinguished from selfishness. It may be proper here to distinguish between self-love and selfishness; not that they are essentially different, but only in the use of the terms as they are employed in common discourse.

By selfishness, we mean such a regard to our own things, as is inconsistent with, and destructive of, a right regard to the things of others: whereas by self-love, we mean nothing more than that attention to our own affairs which we owe to ourselves as part of universal being. Selfishness means the neglect or injury of others, in order to concentrate our views, and desires, and pursuits in ourselves; while self-love means only that proper and due regard to our own interests which we may pay, without the neglect or injury of our neighbor.

Self-love, when exercised in connection with, and subordinate to, good will to mankind, as it may be, is not only consistent with virtue, but is a part of it; but when not thus connected, it degenerates into selfishness.

Selfishness leads men to seek their own interests in opposition to the interests of others. Multitudes care not whom they oppress, so as they can establish their own power; whom they vilify and degrade, so as they can increase their own fame; whom they impoverish, so as they can accumulate their own wealth; whom they distress, so as they can augment their own comforts. This is the worst and most cruel operation of selfishness. It is the same propensity, only sharpened, and guided, and rendered the more mischievous, by the aid of reason, as that which exists in the vulture and the tiger, and which gorges itself to repletion, deaf to the piercing cries of the helpless victim which struggles in its talons.



Intent only on gratification, it riots amidst misery, if by this means it can aggrandize itself. Looking on the possessions of those around only with an envious eye, it is solicitous that they may be appropriated in some way to itself. This is a horrible and truly infernal disposition; for it would reign with a kind of universal despotism, would subdue all into vassalage, and suffer nothing to exist, but what was tributary to its own comfort.

Selfishness sometimes causes its subjects only to neglect the things of others. They do not oppress, or injure, or despoil; they are neither robbers nor calumniators; but they are so engrossed by self-interest, and so absorbed in self-gratification, as to be utterly regardless of the miseries or comfort of which they cannot but be the spectators. They have no sympathies, no benevolent sensibilities; they have cut themselves off from their species, and care nothing for the happiness of any of their neighbors. Their highest boast and attainment in virtue is, to wrong none: their idea of excellence is purely of a negative kind; to dispel sorrow, to relieve want, to diffuse gladness, especially to make sacrifices; to do this, is an effort which they have never tried, and which they have no inclination to try. The world might perish, if the delocation did not reach them. Miserable and guilty creatures, they forget that they will be punished for not doing good, as well as for doing evil. The *unprofitable servant* was condemned; and the wicked are represented, at the last day, as doomed to hell, not for inflicting sorrow, but for not relieving it.

A man is guilty of selfishness, if he seeks his own things *out of all proportion* to the regard he pays to the things of others.

If, from a regard to our reputation, we cannot live in the total neglect of those around us, and, in deference either to public opinion, or to the remonstrances of our consciences, we are compelled to yield *something* to the claims of the public; yet, at the same time, our concessions may be so measured in quantity, and made with such reluctance and ill will, that our predominant selfishness may be as clearly manifested by what we give, as by what we withhold. That which we call our liberality, manifests, in this case, our avarice; that which we denominate generosity, demonstrates our sinful selfishness.

Selfishness sometimes seeks its own, *under the pretence and profession of promoting the happiness of others*. Where the ruling passion of the heart is the love of applause, large sacrifices of wealth, and time, and ease, and feeling, will be readily made for fame; and where men have objects to gain, which require kindness, conciliation, and attention, nothing in this way is too much to be done, to accomplish their purpose. This is a disgusting operation of this very disgusting temper, when all its seeming good will is but an efflux of kindness, which is to flow back again, in full tide, into the receptacle of self. Many are the detestable traders, whose generosity is only a barter for something in return. How much of the seeming goodness of human nature, of the sympathy with human woe, of the pity for want, of the anxiety for the comfort of wretchedness, which passes current for virtue among mankind, is nothing better than a counterfeit imitation of benevolence—is known only to that God whose omniscient eye traces the secret workings of our depravity through all the labyrinths of a deceitful heart.

But notice now the *subjects*, in reference to which selfishness is indulged.

*Property* is the first. It shows itself in an anxiety to obtain wealth, and an unwillingness to part with it; a disposition greedy as the sea, and barren as the shore. You will see some men so excessively

eager to get profit, that they are ever watching to take undue advantage, and so keen-eyed in looking after their own, that they need be closely inspected, to prevent them from taking *more* than their own: for a man who is prevalently selfish, can hardly be honest. And what they gain, they keep: neither the cause of humanity, nor of religion, can extort money from them, except now and then, to get rid of an importunate suitor, or to prevent their reputation from being utterly ruined.

It is sometimes exercised in reference to *opinion*. Some will not bear contradiction; they must be listened to as sages; to question what they say is to insult them, and is sure to bring down upon the presumptuous skeptic their contempt or their frown. They will scarcely allow any one to speak but themselves; they must be the oracle of every company and the director of every affair, or they retire in disgust, and refuse to act at all. In the concerns of our churches, this is often seen and felt. What is it but pure selfishness, that leads any one to wish that *he* should dictate to the rest; that *his* opinion should be law; and *his* wishes be consulted and obeyed? This is not love; no, love gives up her own, where conscience does not interfere to forbid it, and meekly and quietly resigns its wishes to increase peace and promote harmony: its object is the public good, and its law is the best means of promoting the general welfare. If in the intercourse of life, or the affairs of a church, every individual determined to consult only his own views and wishes, society would be dissolved, and its separate parts embroiled in a state of mutual conflict. In the various discussions which come before a public body, Selfishness says, "I am sure my opinion is correct; and I will, if possible, have my way:" but the language of Love is, "I have stated my opinion and my wishes; if the former does not carry conviction, I by no means wish it to be adopted, nor my desires to be gratified, I am anxious for the comfort of my brethren, and I yield my wishes to theirs."

*Some persons have acquired habits in their general conduct, which are exceedingly annoying to others*; they have sources of personal gratification, peculiarities of humor, in which it is impossible to indulge, without greatly incommoding those around them: but so detestably selfish is their disposition, at least with regard to these practices, that let who will be disturbed, offended, or put to serious inconvenience, they will not forego, in the least degree, their accustomed indulgence. When the unfortunate sufferers were expiring in the Black Hole at Calcutta, and entreated the sentinels to represent their agonizing and fatal condition to the tyrant who had imprisoned them, the guards answered, "No; he is enjoying his repose, and it will be certain death to us if we disturb him, even for your relief." And what better in principle, though certainly a less degree of its operation, is that regard to their appetite, ease, or humor, which many indulge to the annoyance of their neighbors, and which they indulge against the remonstrances of those who suffer? In short, that regard to our comfort which leads us to neglect or sacrifice the felicity of another, let the object to which it is directed be what it may, is the selfishness which kindness opposes and destroys.

This hateful disposition has contrived to conceal itself under many false names and disguises, and thus to find protection from much of the obloquy which it deserves, and which would otherwise be more unsparingly heaped upon it.

The plea of *frugality*, or a just regard to the claims of a family, has often been urged as an excuse for the selfishness of avarice. A man certainly must take care of his own, but not to the in-

jury, or even to the neglect, of all besides. "I have no more," it is often said, "than I want for my style of living; and that style I think necessary for my rank in life. I spend all I get upon my family, and hoard nothing; how, then, can I be selfish?" Mistaken mortal! do you forget that a man's family, is himself multiplied—himself reflected.—Selfish! yes, you are detestably so, if you spend all upon yourself and family, however lavish and unsparing you may be to them.

No expression, no sentiment, has ever been more abused than that of the apostle—"Do all to the glory of God." It has been employed to disguise the most improper motives, and never more frequently, nor more profanely employed, than when it has been used to give a character of religious zeal to actions which every eye could discern originated in an un-mixed selfishness. It is to be feared, that when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, it will be found that, while much has been *professedly* done for the glory of God in the affairs of religion, pure zeal for God's glory is a very rare thing. Certain it is, that much of what has been carried on under the authority of this truly sublime phrase, has emanated from a far less hallowed principle. The gospel has been preached by ministers; places of worship have been built by hearers; distant lands have been visited by missionaries; yea, imprisonment and death may have been sought by martyrs, in some cases, not from pure zeal for God's glory, but under the influence of selfishness. All sorts of artful practices have been supported, all kinds of stormy passions have been indulged, all kinds of injuries have been inflicted, under the pretence of glorifying God; but which, in fact, are to be ascribed to this disposition. When a man is identified with a party, that party is himself, and what he does for the one, he does for the other.

The same remarks will apply to many of those actions which are performed on the *professed ground of regard for the public good*. Pure patriotism is a scarce virtue, and is found but rarely in the breasts of those who are loudest in their praises and professions of it. Many a noisy and self-eulogized patriot—many a zealous supporter of public institutions—many an active reformer of popular errors—many a liberal contributor to humane or religious societies—could their motives be exposed, would be found to act from no higher aims than to get a name for themselves, and to be praised by their fellow-creatures.

Some indulge this disposition under the pretext of *regard for the truth*. Attaching an overweening importance to their own opinions, as if they possessed the attribute of infallibility, overbearing in debate, impatient of contradiction, determined to crush the opinions and resist the influence of those who are opposed to theirs—they quiet their conscience, and silence the voice of remonstrance, with the plea that their vehemence is pure zeal for the interests of truth. They should be less anxious, they say, if it were their personal interest at stake; but they have a right to be earnest, yea, even contentious, in defence of the faith. But they know not themselves, or they would discern that their conduct springs from a proud, imperious, and selfish spirit.

It is time to contemplate the *evil* of selfishness.—It is a direct opposition to the divine benevolence, and is contrary to the habitual temper of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who pleased not himself." It is the cause of all sin, the opposite of all holiness and virtue: it is the source of innumerable other sins, and is placed by the apostle as the head and leader of the eighteen vices which he enumerates as the marks of perilous times, "Men shall be lovers of themselves." This was the sin which introduced all guilt and misery into the world; for the first

transgression, by which Adam fell from innocence, and by which his posterity fell with him, was an effort to raise himself into a state of independence; by selfishness, he laid the world under the burden of the divine condemnation. It is a rejection of all the claims, and an opposition to all the ends and interests, of society; for if all persons were under the influence of predominant selfishness, society could scarcely exist: let each one covet and grasp his own, to the injury or neglect of the rest, and the world becomes a den of wild beasts, where each raven for his prey, and all worry one another. This disposition defeats its own end. God has endowed us with social affections, in the indulgence of which there is real pleasure; the exercise of kindness and the enjoyment of delight are inseparable. "If there be any comfort of love," says the apostle: by which he implied, in the strongest manner, that there is great comfort in it; and, of course, in proportion as we extend the range and multiply the objects of our love, we extend the range and multiply the sources of our happiness. He that loves only himself, has only one joy; he that loves his neighbors, has many. To rejoice in the happiness of others, is to make it our own: to produce it, is to make it more than our own. Lord Bacon has justly remarked, that our sorrows are lessened, and our felicities multiplied, by communication. Mankind had been laboring for ages under the grossest mistake as to happiness, imagining that it arose from receiving; an error which our Lord corrects, by saying, "That it is more blessed to give than to receive." A selfish man who accumulates property, but diffuses not, resembles not the perennial fountain, sending forth fertilizing streams; but the stagnant pool, into which whatever flows remains there, and whatever remains, corrupts: miser is his name, and miserable he is in disposition. Selfishness often brings a terrible retribution in this world: the tears of its wretched subject fall unpitied; and he finds, in the gloomy hour of his want or his woe, that he who determines to be alone in his fulness, will generally be left to himself in his sorrows: and that he who, in the days of his prosperity, drives every one from him by the unkindness of his disposition, will find, in the season of his adversity, that they are too far off to hear his cries for assistance.

This is not an *incurable* temper: but is a disease that requires immediate and diligent attention. Where it not only exists but predominates, the spring of human action must be renewed by regeneration, and we must have that new heart, which is brought to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves. We must meditate often upon the deep criminality of this disposition, and look upon it in all its deformity, till we hate it: being careful in order to this, to strip it of all the disguises which the deceitfulness of the heart has thrown over it.—We must abound in contemplation of the character of God, as infinite in love, and of Jesus Christ, as an incarnation of pure disinterested affection. We must exercise great mortification, laboring to the uttermost to subdue, and if possible to eradicate, this vile disposition; and repeating this again and again, till we begin to taste the pleasure, and to feel the habit of, kindness: at the same time praying earnestly for the help of the Holy Spirit, to assist us in the mighty work of vanquishing a selfish temper.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE UNSUSPICIOUSNESS OF LOVE.

"Charity thinketh no evil."

THERE are two senses which may be attached to this beautiful description of love.



I. It does not *devise* evil. What a horrible demon-like disposition has the Psalmist ascribed to the individual who has no fear of God before his eyes!—"He hath left off to be wise and to do good; he deviseth mischief upon his bed." Such is the delineation given by the inspired writer of the character of some wretched men; and the original is often to be found. They are perpetually scheming to do injury; even their hours of rest are devoted to the impulses of a wicked heart, and they sleep not except they have done mischief. Instead of communing with God upon their bed, this is to commune with the devil, and to hold nightly conference with him who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But without going to the extent of those who live by plunder, extortion, or oppression, and who, as the wolves and tigers of society, are ever prowling about for their prey, there are many who maintain a tolerably respectable character, but are still far too busy in devising evil; this may arise from various motives, to all of which Christian love stands firmly opposed.

*Desire of gain* may lead them to devise means by which they may injure a more prosperous neighbor, a more thriving tradesman, than themselves.—They cannot endure to witness his success, and leave no effort untried to hinder it. They are inventive in the way of insinuation, inuendo, or explicit declaration, to check the tide of his good fortune, and are ever scheming to circumvent and injure him. Or they may be moved by envy, to *devise means for blasting the reputation of a popular rival*, or at least to render him less a favorite with the public. Revenge is ever busy in laying plans to injure its object; it broods in wrathful silence over the real or supposed injury, and looks round on every side for the opportunity and the means of full retaliation. *A love of sporting with the fears of the timid and the weak* has led some to delight in finding means for exciting their alarms: they do not desire to inflict pain so much from a malignity of disposition as from a wanton pleasure in raising a joke. Such jests as occasion distress, are, whatever may be pretended by their authors, a kind of devil's play, who can never relax from the work of tormenting, except it be to occasion lighter pains, and whose very sport is the infliction of misery. It is dreadful that the human intellect should ever be employed in devising evil; and yet, passing by the cabinets of statesmen, where hostile and unprincipled aggressions are so often planned against a weaker state; and the closets of monarchs, where schemes which are to entail the horrors of war upon millions are contrived without compunction; and the slave-merchant's cabin, where the details are arranged for burning peaceful villages, and dragging into captivity their unoffending inhabitants; and the robber's cave, the murderer's chamber, and the swindler's retreat: passing by these haunts of demons, where the master-spirits of mischief hold their conclave, and digest their dark and horrid purposes; what a prodigious movement of mind is perpetually going on among the subalterns! What a frightful portion of every day's employment of the mental and bodily energies, all over the globe, is seen by the eye of Omniscience, directed by the parent of evil, who is ever going about to *do* evil; so that a great part of mankind seem to have no other prototype but the scorpions which John saw rising out of the bottomless pit, armed both with teeth and stings!

To all these persons, and to all this their conduct, love is diametrically opposed. It thinketh not evil, but good; it deviseth to communicate pleasure, not pain. It shrinks back with instinctive abhorrence from inflicting a moment's suffering, in body or in mind. "Love worketh no ill to its neighbor,"

but employs all its counsels and its cares for his benefit. Like a good spirit it is ever opposing the advice, and counteracting the influence of envy, revenge, or avarice. It would make the miserable happy, and the happy still happier. It retires into the closet, to project schemes for blessing mankind, and then goes out into the crowded regions of want and wretchedness, to execute them: it deviseth good on its bed, and riseth in the morning to fulfil the plans of mercy with which it had sunk to rest. "Love thinketh no evil."

II. But probably the apostle meant, that it does not *impute* evil. Lovely charity! the farther we go, the more we discover thy charms: thy beauty is such, that it is seen the more, the more closely it is inspected; and thy excellence such, that it never ceases to grow upon acquaintance. Thou art not in haste to criminate as if it were thy delight to prove men wicked: but art willing to impute a good motive to men's actions, till a bad one is clearly demonstrated.

It is proper, however, to remark here, that love is not quite blind: it is not, as we have already said, virtue in its dotage—having lost its power of discrimination between good and evil; nor is it holiness in its childhood, which, with puerile simplicity, believes every thing that is told it, and that it is imposed upon by every pretender. No; it is moral excellence in the maturity of all its faculties—in the possession of all its manly strength. Like the judge upon the bench, penetrating, yet not censorious, holding the balance with an even hand, acting as counsel for the prisoner, rather leaning to the side of the accused than to that of the accuser, and holding him innocent till he is proved to be guilty.

There are some persons of a peculiarly suspicious temper, who look with a distrustful eye upon every body and upon every action. It would seem as if the world were in a conspiracy against them, and that every one who approached them came with a purpose of mischief. They invert the proper order of things; and instead of imputing a good motive till the bad one is proved, impute a bad one till the good one is made apparent; and so extremely sceptical are they on the subject of moral evidence, that what comes with the force of demonstration to the rest of mankind, in the way of establishing the propriety of an action, scarcely amounts, in their view to probability. Those who suspect every body, are generally to be suspected themselves. Their knowledge of human nature has been obtained at home, and their fears in reference to their neighbors are the reflected images of their own disposition. But without going to this length, we are all too apt to impute evil to others.

I. We are too forward to *suspect the piety of our neighbors*, and to ascribe, if not direct hypocrisy, yet ignorance, or presumption, as the ground of their profession. Upon some very questionable, or imperfect evidence—upon some casual expression, or some doubtful action—we pronounce an individual to be a self-deceiver or a hypocrite. There is far too much proneness to this in the religious world; too much haste in excluding each other from the body of Christ; too much precipitancy in cutting each other off from the immunities of the Christian church. To decide infallibly upon character, is not only the prerogative of the Deity, but requires his attributes. There may be some grains of wheat hid among the chaff, which we may be at a loss to discover. We must be careful how we set up our views or our experience, as the test of character, so as to condemn all who do not come up to our standard. It is a fearful thing to unchristianize any one, and it should be done only upon the clearest evidence of his being in an unconverted state.—Without being accused with lax or latitudinarian

views, I may observe that we should make great allowance for the force of education, for peculiar habits acquired in circumstances different from our own, and for a phraseology learnt among those whose views are but imperfect. To impute to a professor of religion the sin of hypocrisy, or mere formality, and to deny the reality of his religion altogether, is too serious a thing for such short-sighted creatures as we are, except in cases which are absolutely indisputable.

2. We are too prone to impute *bad motives in reference to particular actions*. Sometimes, where the action is good, we ascribe it to some sinister or selfish inducement operating in the mind of him by whom it is performed. This is not unfrequently done where we have no contention with the individual, and the imputation is merely the effect of envy; but it is more frequently done in cases where we have personal dislike. When the action is of a doubtful nature, how apt are we to lose sight of all the evidence which may be advanced in favor of its being done from a *good* motive, and with far less probability decide that the motive is *bad*. If we are the object of the action, we too commonly conclude instantly, and almost against evidence, that a bad motive dictated it. Although the circumstance is at worst equivocal, and admits of a two-fold interpretation, we promptly determine that an insult or an injury was intended, when every one but ourselves clearly discerns that no such design can be fairly imputed. A person passes us in the street without speaking, and we immediately believe that it was an act of intentional insult—forgetting that it is probable he did not see us, or was so immersed in thought as not to recognize us. A general remark is made in conversation, which we suppose with no other evidence than its applicability to us, was intended to expose us before the company, when, perhaps the individual who made it had no more reference to us than to a man on the other side of the globe. A thousand cases might be mentioned, and in which, of two motives that may be imputed, we choose the evil one. If a person has previously injured us, we are peculiarly propense to this unchristian practice of thinking evil of him.—We can scarcely allow ourselves to believe that he can do any thing relating to us, but from an improper inducement; we suspect all his words and all his actions; nor is the propensity less strong in those cases where we have been the aggressors; we then set down every thing done by the injured person to the influence of revenge.

The evil of such a disposition is manifest. *It is explicitly and frequently prohibited in God's word.*—This is the censoriousness forbidden by our Lord, where he says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged;" and which is condemned by Paul, where he says, "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." James commands us "Not to speak evil one of another; for he that speaketh evil of his brother, judgeth his brother." "Evil surmisings" are placed by the apostle among the sins which oppose the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*It is an invasion of the prerogative of Deity, who alone can search the heart, and read the motives of the breast.* It is injurious to the character of our brethren, and disturbs the peace of society. Half of the broils which arise in the world, and of the schisms which spring up in the church, may be traced to this wicked propensity of "thinking evil;" for if men think evil, it is an easy step to speak evil, and then to do evil: so that the origin of many quarrels will be found in the false impressions of a suspicious mind—the misapprehension of a censorious judgment. It is a disposition which our own observation

and experience are quite sufficient, if we would be guided by them, to correct. How often, how very often, have we found ourselves mistaken in this matter! How frequently has subsequent evidence shown us our error in imputing a bad motive to an action, which, at the time, to say the worst of it, was only of a doubtful character! We have discovered that, to have originated in accident, which we once thought to have been the result of design; and have found that, to have proceeded from ignorance, which we had hastily set down to malice. How many times, have we blushed and grieved over our precipitancy, and yet in opposition to our experience and to our resolutions, we still go on to think evil.

But "love thinketh no evil:" this divine virtue delights to speak well and think well of others: she talks of their good actions, and says little or nothing, except when necessity compels her, of their bad ones. She holds her judgment in abeyance as to motives, till they are perfectly apparent. She does not look round for evidence to prove an evil design, but hopes that what is doubtful will, by farther light, appear to be correct; she imputes not evil, so long as good is propable; she leans to the side of candor rather than to that of severity; she makes every allowance that truth will permit; looks at all the circumstances which can be pleaded in mitigation; suffers not her opinions to be formed till she has had opportunity to escape from the mist of passion, and to cool from the wrath of contention. Love desires the happiness of others; and how can she be in haste to think evil of them?

If it be asked, Do all good men act thus? I again reply, They act thus just in proportion as they are under the influence of Christian charity. The apostle does not say that every man who is possessed of charity does so, but that charity itself thinketh no evil: and therefore implies that every good man will act thus in the same degree in which he submits to the influence of this virtue. Divine grace! hasten thy universal reign on earth, and put an end to those evil surmisings by which the comfort of mankind and the fellowship of the saints are so much disturbed!

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE JOY OF LOVE.

*"Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."*

KEEPING up the personification of love as presented by the apostle, we may observe that it has its joys and its sorrows; and its smiles and its tears are the expressions of good will—the tokens of benevolence. We are first told in what it does *not* take complacency—"It rejoiceth not in iniquity."

Sin is, in itself, an evil of enormous magnitude. As committed against a Being whom we are under infinite obligation to love, and serve, and glorify, it must partake of infinite degrees of demerit. It is a violation of that law which, as an emanation from the perfection of the Deity, is itself perfect and well deserves the eulogium pronounced upon it by the apostle, when he declares it to be "holy, and just, and good." As this is the rule of government to the moral universe, and intended to preserve its order, dependence and harmony; sin, by opposing its authority, disturbs this order, breaks this dependence, and seeks to introduce the reign of confusion and misery. None, but the infinite mind, is competent to calculate the mischief which is likely to be produced by a single act of sin, if left to itself without a remedy, or without a punishment. We have only to see what sin has done, to judge of its most evil and hateful nature. All the misery which either is



or ever will be on earth, or in hell, is the result of sin. It is the greatest evil—the only evil in the universe. It is the opposite, and the enemy to God; the contrast to all that is pure and glorious in his divine attributes, and ineffably beautiful perfections; and, as such, it is that which he cannot but hate with a perfect hatred. It is not merely the opposite of his nature, but the opponent of his government—the rebel principle that disputes with him for his seat of majesty and the dominion of the universe, saying to him, “Thus far shalt thou go and no farther;” seeking to cast him down from the throne which he hath prepared in the heavens, and to rise, with impious usurpation, into the holy place of the high and lofty one. Sin would thus stop the fountain of life and blessedness, by ending the reign of infinite beneficence; and is, therefore, the enemy of every thing that constitutes the felicity of the various orders of rational existence. The happiness of angels and archangels, of cherubim and seraphim, and of the spirits made perfect above as well as of those who are renewed by the grace of God on earth, arises from holiness; separate and apart from holiness, there can be no happiness for an intellectual being. Now sin is the contrary of holiness, and thus the enemy of happiness. How, then, can love delight in iniquity? If it wills the felicity of rational beings, it must hate that which directly resists and extinguishes it.

And as it cannot delight in *sin in the abstract*, so neither can it take pleasure in *committing it*: for whoever commits it, in so far approves of it, upholds its dominion, extends its reign, diffuses its mischief, and does all he can to recommend it. If his transgression be a common one, he gives the patronage of his example to all of the same kind; and if it be a new one, he becomes an inventor and propagator upon earth of a fresh curse and tormentor. That many do delight in committing iniquity cannot be doubted; they follow it with greediness, and drink it in as the thirsty ox drinketh in water. The Scripture speaks of the joys of fools, and of the pleasures of sin. Horrid as is the association, between sin and gratification, it certainly exists. Some men have gone so far as to be self-murderers, but who ever took *pleasure* in the act of destroying themselves? Who ever drank the poison, as he would wine, with a merry heart? Who ever dallied in sportive pleasure with the pistol or the dagger, or wound the cord in jocularly round his throat before he strangled himself with it? Who ever went skipping with a light fantastic step to the edge of the precipice, or to the brink of the river, from which he was about to plunge into eternity? And yet sinners do all this, in reference to their souls. They commit self-murder, the murder of their immortal spirits, to the song of the drunkard, the noise of music, the smile of a harlot, and the laugh of the fool. They sin, and not only so, but *delight* in iniquity. So does not charity.

Nor can it delight in *the sins of others*. It cannot do as fools do, “make a mock of sin.” It is most horrid to find pastime and sport in those acts of transgression by which men ruin their souls. Some laugh at the reeling gait, and idiot looks, and maniac gestures, of the drunkard, whom, perhaps, they have first led on to intoxication, to afford them merriment; or they are diverted by the oaths of the swearer, whose malice and revenge are at work to invent new forms of profanity; or they are made merry by the mischief with which the persecutors of the righteous often oppose and interrupt the solemnity of worship; or they attack, with railery and scorn, the tender consciences of the saints, and loudly applaud the wit which aims its sharpened arrows against religion. But love weeps over sin, as that which brings the greatest misery. “For

sin is the greatest and highest infelicity of the creature, depraves the soul within itself, vitiates its powers, deforms its beauty, extinguishes its light, corrupts its purity, darkens its glory, disturbs its tranquillity and peace, violates its harmonious joyful state and order, and destroys its very life. It disaffects it to God, severs it from him, engages his justice and influences his wrath against it. What! to rejoice in sin, that despises the Creator, and hath wrought such tragedies in the creation!—that turned angels out of heaven, man out of paradise!—that hath made the blessed God so much a stranger to our world; broken off the intercourse in so great a part, between heaven and earth; obstructed the pleasant commerce which had otherwise probably been between angels and men; so vilely debased the nature of man, and provoked the displeasure of his Maker towards him!—that once overwhelmed the world with a deluge of water, and will again ruin it by a destructive fire! To rejoice in so hateful a thing as sin, is to do that mad part, to cast about firebrands, arrows and death, and say, “Am I not in sport?”—it is to be glad that such an one is turning a man into a devil! a reasonable, immortal soul, capable of heaven, into a fiend of hell!—to be glad that such a soul is tearing itself off from God, is blasting its own eternal hopes, and destroying all its possibilities of a future well being. Blessed God! how opposite a thing is this to charity—the offspring of God! The birth of heaven, as it is here below, among mortals; the beauty and glory of it, as it is there above, in its natural seal. The eternal bond of living union among the blessed spirits that inhabit there, and which would make our world, did it universally obtain here, another heaven.”\*

No: it is the sport of devils, not of men who feel the influence of love, to delight in sin. We justly condemn the cruelty of the Romans, in glutting their eyes with the scenes of the amphitheatre, where the gladiators were torn in pieces by the fangs of lions and tigers; but theirs was innocent recreation, compared with that of the perverted and wicked mind, which can be gratified by seeing an immortal creature ruining and damning his most precious soul. Go, laugh at the agonies of the wretched man tortured upon the rack, and make merry with his distorted features, and strange and hideous cries;—go, laugh at the convulsive throes of the epileptic;—go to the field of battle, and mock the groans of the wounded and dying;—all this is more humane and merciful than delighting in sin. Could we look down upon the burning lake, and see there how the miserable ghosts are tossed upon the billows of the burning deep, and hear their dreadful exclamations,—“Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?”—should we, then, divert ourselves with sin? Charity *does* thus look upon their misery, so far as her imagination goes, and feels a cold horror and a shivering dread. She mourns over sin wheresoever she sees it, and weeps for those who never weep for themselves. This is her declaration, as she looks around upon the sins of mankind—“Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.”

Love cannot delight in *the misconduct of an enemy or a rival*. This, perhaps, is the precise meaning of the apostle, in the expression we are now illustrating. Few of us are without some one or more who are considered by us, or who consider themselves in the character of an opponent, or a competitor; and in such cases there is great danger of our being pleased with their moral failures.

\*Howe on “Charity in Reference to other Men’s Sins”

It is not often that any, except those who are more than ordinarily depraved, will allow themselves to go so far as to *tempt* an enemy to sin, in order to gain the advantage over him. Yet there are some such, who will lay snares for his feet, and watch with eager hope for his halting: and when unable to accomplish this by their own personal exertions, will not scruple to engage accomplices in the work. Weaker and junior agents, who probably may know nothing, or know but little of the purpose for which they are employed, may be drawn by the master-spirit of mischief into the confederacy, and be made the instrument of tempting an immortal creature to sin against God, and ruin his own soul. This is the climax of revenge, the highest pitch of wickedness, and the greatest refinement of human malice. It is to extend the mischief of revenge to another world; to call in the aid of devils, and the quenchless fire, to supply the defects of our ability to inflict misery in proportion to our wishes; and to perpetuate our ill will through eternity. To tempt men to sin against God, with a view to serve ourselves by degrading them before the world, unites much of the malevolence of a devil, with as much of his ingenuity.

But if we cannot go to such a length as to tempt an opponent or rival to sin, yet, *if we feel a delight in seeing him fall by other means*; if we indulge a secret complacency in beholding him rendering himself vile, blasting his reputation, destroying his popularity, and ruining his cause; if we inwardly exclaim, "Ah! so would I have it—now he has done for himself—it is all over with him—this is just what I wished and wanted;"—we delight in iniquity.—And, oh, how inexpressibly dreadful to be seen with a smiling countenance, or an aspect which, if it relax not into a smile, is sufficiently indicative of the joyful state of the heart, to run with eagerness to proclaim the intelligence of the victory we have gained by that act of another which endangers his salvation: how contrary all this to the charity which delights in happiness!

Perhaps we only go so far as to be pleased that the object of our dislike has been himself injured in a way similar to that in which he has injured us. Although we may not allow ourselves to inflict any direct injury in the way of revenge, nor to engage others to do it for us, yet if we see him ill-treated by another person and rejoice; if we exclaim, "I do not pity him, he has deserved it all for his behavior to me, I am glad he has been taught how to behave to his neighbor;"—this is contrary to the law of love—it is a complacency in sin. Nor is the case altered, if our joy be professedly felt on account of the consequences which the sin has brought upon him. We may sometimes attempt to deceive ourselves, by the supposition that we do not rejoice in the iniquity that is committed, but only because it has been succeeded by those fruits which the misconduct has merited. We interpret it into a proof that God has taken up the cause of injured innocence, and avenged us of our adversary.

There are many circumstances and situations which more particularly expose us to the violation of this law of charity. In the case of two different denominations in religion, or two congregations of the same party in a town, between whom a misunderstanding and schism have been permitted to grow up and to operate, there is imminent danger of this unchristian spirit. Alas, alas! that the bosoms of men should be liable to such sentiments! Oh! shame, deep and lasting shame, upon some professing Christians, "that such unhallowed emotions should ever be excited in their bosoms!" "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice—lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." Let

it not be known that the bad passions of the human heart build their nests, like obscure birds, round the altar of the Lord; or, like poisonous weeds, entwine their baleful tendrils round the pillars of his house. We do not mean to say, that any good man can rejoice in the open immorality and vice of an opponent; but are there not many, in all large communities, who, though of Israel in one sense, belong not to it in reality? And where the failure does not proceed to the length of a more awful delinquency, but consists merely of some minor breaches of the law of propriety, are not even the best of men sometimes exposed to the temptation of rejoicing over them, if their cause is promoted by them? The weaker party, especially, if they have been ill used, treated with pride and scorn, oppression and cruelty, are very apt to take delight in those instances of misconduct by which their opponents have brought upon themselves the prejudice of the public.

*Rival candidates* for fame, or power, or influence, whether in ecclesiastical or secular affairs, are liable to the sin of rejoicing in iniquity. Hard, indeed, is it for such hearts as ours to repress all feelings of secret complacency in those acts of a competitor by which he sinks, and we are raised, in public esteem. That man gives himself credit for more virtue than he really possesses who imagines he should find it easy to weep over the follies and mis-carriages of the rival who contends with him for what it is of much importance he should obtain, or of an enemy who has deeply injured him. Job mentions it as a convincing proof of his integrity, and a striking display of good conduct:—"If I rejoiced in the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him." And it was a fine manifestation of the generosity of David, that instead of rejoicing over those sins which, in the conduct of Saul brought on the catastrophe that elevated him to the throne of Israel, he bewailed them with as sincere and pungent grief, as he could have done had Saul been the kindest of fathers. That we are in danger of the sin we are now considering, is also evident from the exhortation of Solomon—"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth."

Charity, if it had full possession of our hearts, and entire sway, would not only repress all outward exhibitions of this delight, but all inward emotions; would make us dread lest an opponent should fall into sin; would not allow us to see him go unwarned to transgression, but compel us to admonish him of his danger; and would make us cheerfully forego the greatest advantage to our cause or reputation, that we might gain by his misconduct. This is the holiness of love, and a reproof of the genuine hatred of sin; for if we mourn only over our own sins, or the sins of our friends, or of our party, there may be something selfish in our grief after all; but to mourn over iniquity, when, though it does harm to another, it may, in some sense, promote our cause, is, indeed, to hate sin for its own sake, and for the sake of him by whom it is condemned.

We go on now to show in what love *does* rejoice: "Charity rejoiceth in the truth."

By the truth we are not to understand veracity as opposed to falsehood. The apostle is not speaking of this subject. The truth means the doctrine of the word of God. This is a very common way of describing the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. "Sanctify them by thy truth," said our Lord; "thy word is truth." The truth *itself* is the object of complacency to love. Truth is the most glorious thing in the universe, next to God and holiness. It has been the great object of mental pursuits since the creation of the world: millions of minds have



travelled in quest of it; philosophers profess to be so enamored even with the very term, that they have worshipped it as a mere abstraction, which, after all, they could not understand. What contentions has it originated—to what systems has it given rise—what dogmatism has it been the occasion of! And yet, after all, apart from revelation, what is it but a name? This gives it reality and form;—this tells us where it is, what it is, and how it is to be obtained. Here we learn that the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and all the doctrine it includes or implies, is *THE TRUTH*. The question is answered, proposed by Pilate to the illustrious prisoner at his bar, and the oracle of heaven has declared that the Scriptures are *the truths*. And the truth is the object of complacency to charity; the bright star, yea, the full-orbed sun, that enlightens its eye, and points out the resting-place of its heart. And it can rejoice in nothing else. Falsehood and error, and the devices of the human mind, are the objects of its disgust and abhorrence. It is evident, then, as we have already shown, that love differs essentially from that vague kind of charity which is so much cried up at present, both without and within the pale of the church; which scorns to proceed upon the Scripture ground of the truth and its genuine influence; reviling as narrow-mindedness and an uncharitable party spirit, all regard to particular doctrines;—but extends its indiscriminate embrace, and pays its idle and unmeaning compliments to all persons, of whatever denomination or persuasion, presuming that they are all *serious* and *mean well*, however they may differ from each other, or from the Scripture, in sentiment or in practice. One of the maxims of this spurious candor, as we have already considered, is, that there is no moral turpitude in mental error; and that every thing is non-essential which does not relate to the interests of morality. How widely this counterfeit liberality differs from the apostolic charity, is evident from the fact which we are now considering, and by which we are told that love *delights in the truth*.—For the truth it will be zealous, as for an object dearer than life itself; to this it will be ready to set the seal of blood, and not resign or betray it through fear of the gloom of the captive's dungeon, or dread of the martyr's stake. This is its joy in life—its support in death: this is the dear companion of its pilgrimage on earth, and its eternal associate in the felicities of heaven.

But as the truth is here opposed to iniquity, the apostle especially intended to state that *holiness* is the object of complacency to charity. Holiness is the rational and appropriate effect of the truth believed. No man can receive the truth in the love of it, without bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory of God. It is the delight of this pure and heavenly grace to contemplate holiness wherever it is to be found. Ascending to the celestial world, it joins the choirs of the cherubin, to look upon the spotless One, and with them to give utterance to its ecstasies, in the short but sublime anthem, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty." Undismayed by the roar of thunder, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; by the thick darkness, and the vivid lightnings, and the agitation of the quaking earth;—it ventures near the base of Sinai, and, for the delight that it has in holiness, rejoices in the law which is the rule of righteousness. The angels are pleasant to behold, because they are clad in garments of unsullied purity; and the crown of glory which Adam wore before his fall was his innocence; and the deep degradation into which he fell by his apostacy, was loss of holiness, in which consisted the image of God. The ceremonial law has an excellence in the eye of charity, because it teaches the

value of holiness in the view of God, and the necessity of it for man. The prophetic visions are all delighted in, because they are distinguished by the beauties of holiness; and the whole gospel of Jesus is dear to the heart of love, because it is intended to purify unto Christ a church, which he will present to the Father without spot, wrinkle, or blemish.—Men are esteemed and loved on earth as they have this moral excellence stamped upon their souls; and in looking for a heaven which shall satisfy all its desires, it can think of nothing higher and better than a state of sinless purity.

So ardent and so uniform is charity's regard to holiness, that it rejoices in it when it is found in an enemy or a rival. Yes; if we are under the influence of this divine virtue as we ought to be, we shall desire, and desire very fervently too, that those who have displeased or injured us were better than they are. We shall wish to see every speck of imperfection gone from their conduct, and their whole character standing out to the admiration of the world, and receiving the approbation of those by whom they are now condemned. We shall be willing to do any thing by which they may conciliate to themselves the favor of the alienated multitude, and also raise themselves to the vantage ground on which their misconduct has placed us above them. This *is* charity, to rejoice in those moral excellences, and gaze upon them with gratitude and complacency, which invest the character of one that opposes us with loveliness and beauty, and by which his cause is promoted, in some degree, to the detriment of ours. Men of little virtue may sometimes join from policy in those commendations of another's goodness, the justice of which they cannot dispute, and the harmony of which they dare not disturb; but it is only the Christian, who is far advanced in the practice of all that is difficult in religion, who can secretly rejoice, without envy or jealousy in those very virtues which draw away the public attention from himself, and cause him and his party to pass into eclipse and to sink into shadow. "O Charity! this is *thy* work, and *this* thy glory;—a work too rarely performed—a glory too rarely seen—in this region of selfishness, in this world of imperfection; where, of the multitudes that profess to submit to thy sway, there are still so few who are really governed by thy laws, and inspired by thine influence."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE CANDOR OF LOVE.

"*Charity beareth all things.*"

SOME writers consider this verse as an amplification of the foregoing one, and explain it, in reference to the truth, in the following manner:—"It beareth all things" reported in the truth, however opposed to the corruption of human nature, and counts none of them hard sayings or unfit to be borne; "it believeth all things" imported in the great truth, or all the inferences which the apostles have deduced from it, as being well affected to the source from whence they flow; "hopeth for all things" promised in it, and "endureth all things;" or patiently suffers all the afflictions that can attend a steady attachment to it. This gives a very good sense of the words, and admits the full force of the universal expressions. Yet it certainly agrees better with the scope of the apostle, to understand the verse with reference to the brethren as the objects of it.

If we render the first expression, and which we are now about to consider, as our translators have done, it may signify our bearing one another's burdens and weaknesses, which is to fulfil the law of Christ: and it must be confessed this is strictly true; for whoever is under the influence of this principle,

will possess a spirit of tender sympathy. In this world we all groan, being burdened. Each has his own load of care, or grief, or imperfection. This is not the state where we find perfect rest. How wide is the scope, how frequent the opportunity, how numerous the occasions, for sympathy! And, who that is possessed of benevolence, can allow himself to pass a brother upon the road, laboring under a heavier load than his own, without offering to bear a part? We are not to be impertinently officious and intermeddling, nor to pry into the secrets of our neighbors with an inquisitive curiosity: but to inquire into the cause which gives them so much solicitude or so much grief, is the duty of those who are the witnesses of their careworn countenance and downcast look. What an unfeeling heart must that man have, who can see the very form of care and sorrow before him, and never kindly ask the reason of its existence? It is but little that sympathy can do for the sufferer, but that little should be most cheerfully afforded. To be unnoticed and unpitied in our griefs, adds greatly to their weight.—For what purpose are Christians collected into churches? not merely to eat the Lord's Supper together: this could be done without any such distinct recognition of a mutual relationship, as that which takes place in the fellowship of believers.—The end and design of this bond is, that being united as one body, the members might cherish a general sympathy for each other, and exercise their benevolence in the way of mutual assistance. The rich, by their munificence, should help their poorer brethren to bear the burden of poverty; the strong should aid the weak to bear the burden of their fears and apprehensions; those who are in health and ease should by seasonable visits, and soothing words, and kind offices, bear the burdens of the sick; counsel should always be given, when it is sought by those who are in difficulty; and a disposition should pervade the whole body, to render its varied resources, talents, and energies, available for the benefit of the whole.

But though this also gives a beautiful meaning, and enjoins a necessary duty, it is not the right view of the passage. The word translated "bearing" all things, signifies also, "to contain, to conceal, to cover." The idea of "bearing" is parallel in meaning with that of "enduring," of which the apostle speaks in the latter part of the verse; and it is not probable that it was his intention to express the same thought twice. Adopting "concealment" as the sentiment intended to be expressed and the failings of others as the object to which it refers, I shall go on to show in what way it is practised.

To do this with still greater effect, we shall exhibit a general view of those sins to which the view of Christian charity stands exposed; and these are, *slander, detraction, and rash judging, or censoriousness.*

Perhaps there are no sins which are more frequently alluded to, or more severely rebuked, in Scripture, than those of the tongue; and for this reason,—because there are none to which we are so frequently tempted—none we are so prone to indulge, or so bold to excuse—none which are so fruitful of disorder and discomfort to society. Besides swearing, falsehood, obscenity, blasphemy,—the Scripture speaks of bearing false witness, railing, tale-bearing, whispering, backbiting, slander, and reproach:—a dismal enumeration of vices belonging to that member which was intended to be the glory of our frame. By *SLANDER*, we understand the circulation of a *false* report with the intention of injuring a neighbor's reputation. Its most vicious excess is the *invention* and construction of a story which is absolutely false from beginning to end.—Its next lower grade, though little inferior in crimi-

nality, is to become the *propagator* of the tale, knowing it to be false. "This," says BARROW, "is to become the hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no coiner who hath not emissaries and accomplices ready to take from his hand and put off his money; and such slanderers at second hand are scarcely less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill, but the broker showeth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between the great devil that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps that run about and disperse them." The next operation of slander is to *receive and spread, without examining* into the truth of them, false and injurious reports. It is a part of a good man's character, that "He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbor;" *i. e.* he does not easily entertain it, much less propagate it; he does not receive it but upon the most convincing evidence: but slander founds reproachful tales upon conjecture or suspicion, and raises an injurious representation upon a suppositious foundation. Sometimes it withers the reputation of a neighbor by rash speaking, or vehemently affirming things which it has no reason to believe, and no motive for affirming, but the hope of exciting ill will. Slander is *sinful*, because forbidden in every part of Scripture; *crucial*, because it is robbing our neighbor of that which is dearer to him than life; and *foolish*, because it subjects the calumniator himself to all kinds of inconvenience,—for it not only exposes him to the wrath of God, the loss of his soul, and the miseries of hell in the world to come, but it makes him odious in the present life, causes him to be shunned and discredited, arms his conscience against his own peace, brings upon himself the most reproachful accusations, and not unfrequently the vengeance of that public justice, which is rightly appointed to be the guardian not only of property and life, but of reputation also.

DETRACTION, or backbiting, differs a little from slander, though, in its general nature and constitution, it closely resembles it. Slander involveth an imputation of falsehood; but detraction may clothe itself with truth: it is sweetened poison, served from a golden cup by the hand of hypocrisy. A detractor's aim is the same as the slanderer's—to injure the reputation of another; but he avails himself of means that are a little different. He represents persons and actions under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can,—setting forth those which may make them appear guilty or ridiculous, and throwing into the shade such as are commendable. "When he cannot deny the metal to be good and the stamp to be true, he clippeth it, and so rejecteth it from being current: he misconstrues doubtful actions unfavorably, and throws over the very virtues of his neighbors the name of faults,—calling the sober sour, the conscientious morose, the devout superstitious, the frugal sordid, the cheerful frivolous, and the reserved crafty: he diminishes from the excellence of good actions, by showing how much better they might have been done; and attempts to destroy all confidence in long-established character, and all respect for it, by pitching on some single act of imprudence, and expanding it into a magnitude, and darkening it into a shadow, which truth and justice forbid. Such is the backbiter; whose crime is compounded of the ingredients of ill humor, pride, selfishness, envy, malice, falsehood, cowardice, and folly. Backbiting must be peculiarly hateful to God. "He is the God of truth, and therefore detesteth lying, of which detraction ever hath a spice: He is the God of justice, and therefore doth especially abhor wronging the best persons and actions: He is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: He is



jealous of his glory, and therefore cannot endure it to be abused by slurring his good gifts and graces: He cannot but hate the offence which approacheth to that most heinous and unpardonable sin, that consisteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodness, ascribing them to bad causes."

The same writer, in speaking of the mischief of detraction, as discouraging others from the performance of that goodness which is thus vilified and defamed, has the following beautiful remarks.—Many, seeing the best men thus disparaged, and the best actions vilified, are disheartened and deterred from practising virtue, especially in a conspicuous and eminent degree:—"Why," will many a man say, "shall I be strictly good, seeing goodness is so liable to be misused? Had I not better be contented with a mediocrity and obscurity of goodness, than by a glaring lustre thereof to draw the envious eye and kindle raging obloquy upon me?" And when the credit of virtue is blasted in its practices, many will be diverted from it. So will it grow out of request, and the world be corrupted by these agents of the EVIL ONE. It were advisable, upon this consideration, not to seem ever to detract, even not then when we are assured that, by *speaking* ill, we shall not really *do* it; if we should discover any man to seem worthy, or to be so reputed, whom yet we discern, by standing in a nearer light, not to be truly such, yet wisdom would commonly dictate, and goodness dispose, not to mar his repute. If we should observe, without danger of mistake, any plausible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or designs, yet ordinarily in discretion and honesty, we should let it pass with such commendation as its appearance may procure, rather than slur it by venting our disadvantageous apprehensions about it; for it is no great harm that any man should enjoy undeserved commendation; our granting its claims is but being over just, which, if it ever be a fault, can hardly be so in this case, wherein we do not expend any cost or suffer any damage; but it may do mischief to blemish any appearance of virtue: it may be a wrong thereto, to deface its very image; the very disclosing of hypocrisy doth inflict a wound on goodness, and exposeth it to scandal, for bad men will then be prone to infer that all virtue doth proceed from the like bad principles; so the disgrace cast on that which is spurious, will redound to the prejudice of that which is most genuine. And if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly false, much more so in regard to that which is possibly true; and far more still is it so in respect to that which is clear and sure.

CENSORIOUSNESS is another sin of the same class—another child of the same family: varying, however, from those we have already considered by acting not so much in the way of *reporting* faults as in condemning them. It is different from slander, inasmuch as it assumes, that what it condemns is true; and from detraction, inasmuch as it is not exercised with an intention to injure another in public estimation, but only to reprove him for what is wrong. It assumes the character, not of a witness, but of a judge: hence the injunction, "Judge not." Censoriousness, then, means a disposition to scrutinize men's motives—to pass sentence upon their conduct—to reproach their faults,—accompanied by an unwillingness to make all reasonable allowances for their mistakes, and a tendency to the side of severity rather than to that of leniency. We are not to suppose that all inspection and condemnation of the conduct of others is sin; nor that all reproof of offenders is a violation of the law of charity; nor that we are to think well of our neighbors, in opposition to the plainest evidence; nor that we are to

entertain such a credulous opinion of the excellence of mankind, as unsuspectingly to confide in every man's pretences: but what we condemn is needlessly inquiring into the conduct and motives of other men; examining and arraigning them at our bar, when we stand in no relation to them that requires such a scrutiny; delivering our opinion when it is not called for; pronouncing sentence with undue severity, and heaping the heaviest degree of reproach upon an offender which we can find language to express.

The world is become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation, is, if we mark it, taken up in judging; every company is a court of justice, every seat becometh a tribunal, at every table standeth a bar, wherunto all men are cited—whereat every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced; no sublimity or sacredness of dignity—no integrity or innocence of life—no prudence or circumspection of demeanor,—can exempt any person from it. Not one escapes being taxed under some odious name or scandalous character or other. Not only the outward actions and visible practices of men are judged, but their retired sentiments are brought under review—their inward dispositions have a verdict passed upon them—their final states are determined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once; and nothing is it in one breath to damn whole churches—at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit: yea, God himself is hardly spared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of those who—as the Psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race does yet survive—speak loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens. Barrow, in order to censure this temper, gives the following qualifications of a judge. "He should be appointed by competent authority, and not intrude himself into office. To how many censors may we say, 'Who made thee a judge?' He should be free from all prejudice and partiality. Is this the case with the censorious? He should never proceed to judgment, without a careful examination of the case, so as well to understand it. Let the private self-appointed judges remember this, and act upon the principle of Solomon—"He that answereth a matter before he hear-eth it, it is a folly and a shame to him." He should never pronounce sentence but upon good grounds, after certain proof and full conviction. If this rule were observed, how many censures would be prevented. He will not meddle with causes beyond the jurisdiction of his court. If this were recollected and acted upon, the voice of unlawful censure would die away in silence; for who are we, that we should try the hearts and search the reins of men, or judge another's servant? He never proceeds against any man, without citing him to appear, either in person, or by his representative, and giving him an opportunity to defend himself. When any one is censured in company, there should always be found some generous mind, who would propose that the accused should be sent for, and the trial put off till he appeared. He must pronounce, not according to private fancy, but to public and established laws. Is this the rule of the censorious? Is it not rather their custom to make their own private opinion the law? He should be a person of great knowledge and ability. What is the usual character of the private censors? Are they not persons of great ignorance and few ideas, who, for want of something else to say, or ability to say it, talk of their neighbors' faults,—a topic on which a child or a fool can be fluent? He is not an accuser; and moreover is, by virtue of his office, counsel for the accused. On the contrary, the censorious are, generally, not only judges but accusers, and counsel *against* the culprits

whom they have brought to their bar. He should lean, as far as the public good will allow, to the side of mercy: but mercy has no place in the bosom of the censorious, and their very justice is cruelty and oppression. He must himself be innocent. Why is there not a voice heard in every company, when the prisoner is arraigned, and the process of judgment begins, saying, "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone!" He proceeds with solemnity and grief, and slowness, to pass the sentence.—But what indecent haste and levity, not excepting joy, do we witness in those who are given to the practice of censuring their neighbors' conduct.\*

Now, to all these sinful practices Christian love stands directly opposed. *It is a long time before it allows itself to perceive the faults of others.* Not more quick is instinct in the bird, or beast, or fish, of prey, to discover its victim, than the detractor and the censorious are to descry imperfections as soon as they appear in the conduct of those around them. Their vision is quite telescopic, to see objects of this kind at a distance, and they have a microscopic power of inspection, to examine those that are small and near; and, when looking at faults, they always employ the highest magnifying power which their instrument admits of: while for the purpose of looking at those spots, which to the naked eye would be lost amidst the surrounding glory, they carry a darkened glass. They do not want to see virtues; no, all that is fair, and good, and lovely, is passed over in quest of deformity and evil. But all this is utterly abhorrent to the nature of love; which, intent upon the well-being of mankind, and anxious for their happiness, is ever looking out for the signs and the symptoms which betoken that the sum of human felicity is perpetually increasing. The eye of the Christian philanthropist is so busily employed in searching for excellence, and so fixed and so ravished by it when it is found, that it is sure to pass over many things of a contrary nature, as not included in the object of its inquiry; just as he who is searching for gems is likely to pass by many common stones unheeded; or as he who is looking for a particular star or constellation in the heavens, is not likely to see the tapers which are near him upon earth. Good men are his delight; and to come at these, very many of the evil generation are passed by: and there is also a singular power of abstraction in his benevolence, to separate, when looking at a mixed character, the good from the evil, and, losing sight of the latter, to concentrate its observation in the former.

And when love is obliged to admit the existence of imperfections, *it diminishes as much as possible their magnitude*, and hides them as much as is lawful from its own notice. It takes no delight in looking at them, finds no pleasure in keeping them before its attention, and poring into them; but turns away from them, as an unpleasant object, as a delicate sense would from whatever is offensive. If we find an affinity between our thoughts and the sins of which we are the spectators, it is a plain proof that our benevolence is of a very doubtful nature, or in a feeble state; on the contrary, if we involuntarily turn away our eyes from beholding evil, and are conscious to ourselves of a strong revulsion, and an acute distress, when we cannot altogether retire from the view of it, we possess an evidence that we know much of that virtue which covereth all things. If we are properly, as we ought to be, under the influence of love, we shall make all reasonable allowances for those things which are wrong in the conduct of our neighbor; we shall, as we have already considered, not be forward to suspect evil; but shall do every thing to lessen the heinousness of the ac-

tion. This is what is meant, when it is said that "Charity covers a multitude of sins. Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins."

It is the wish and the act of love, *to conceal from the public all the faults*, which the good of the offender, and the ends of public justice, do not require to be disclosed. There are cases, in which to conceal offences, whatever kindness it may be to one, would be unkindness to many. If a person living in sin, has so far imposed upon a minister, as to induce him to propose him for admission to the fellowship of the church, it is the bounden duty of any individual, who knows the real character of the candidate, to make it known to the pastor; and the same disclosure should be made in reference to a person already in communion, who is actually living in sin: concealment in these cases is an injury to the whole body of Christians. If a person is likely to be injured in his temporal concerns, by reposing confidence in one who is utterly unworthy of it, it is the duty of those who are acquainted with the snare to warn the destined victim of his danger. If any are so far regardless of the peace of society and the laws of the country, as to be engaged in great crimes against both, concealment on the part of those who are aware of the existence of such practices, is a participation in the crime. As our love is to be universal, as well as particular, it must never be exercised towards individuals in a way that is really opposed to the interests of the community.

But where no other interest is concerned—where no claims demand a disclosure—where no injury is done by concealment, and no benefit is conferred by giving publicity to a fault,—there our duty is to cover it over with the veil of secrecy, and maintain an unbroken silence upon the subject.

Instead of this friendly and amiable reserve, how different is the way in which many act! No sooner have they heard of the commission of a fault, than they set off with the intelligence, as glad as if they bore the tidings of a victory, proclaiming the melancholy fact with strange delight in every company, and almost to every individual they meet; and as there is a greedy appetite in some persons for scandal, they find many ears as open to listen to the tale, as their lips are to tell it: or, perhaps, they relate the matter as a secret, extorting a promise from those to whom they communicate it, that they will never mention it again. But if it be not proper to publish it to the world, why do they speak of it at all? If it be proper for publicity, why lock up others in silence? Sometimes the telling faults in secret is a pitiable kind of weakness, an utter impossibility of keeping any thing in the mind, accompanied by an intention of publishing it only to a single person; but not unfrequently it is a wish to have the gratification of being the first to communicate the report to a large number of persons; each is made to promise that he will not disclose it, that the original reporter may not be anticipated as he pursues his round, and thus have his delight diminished, in being every where the first to tell bad news.

Then there are some *who publish the faults of others under the hypocritical pretence of lamenting over them, and producing in others a caution against the same thing.* You will see them in company putting on a grave countenance, and hear them asking the person who sits near them, but with a voice loud enough to reach every corner of the room, whether he has heard the report of Mr. Such-an-one's conduct: and when every ear is caught, every tongue is silent, and every eye fixed, he will proceed, in a strain of deep lamentation and tender commiseration, to bewail the misconduct of the delinquent,—seasoning the narration of the offence, as he goes

\*Dr. Barrow's Sermons.



through all its circumstances and all its aggravations, with many expressions of pity for the offender, and many words of caution to the company. Thus, under the hypocritical guise of pity and the abhorrence of sin, has he indulged in this mischievous, yet too common propensity, to publish the failings of some erring brother. Has he mentioned the subject to the individual himself? If not, and he has withheld this mode of expressing his pity, what avails his public commiseration? What possible sympathy with the offender can it be, to placard him in public, and blazon his faults in company?

Some there are, who suppose *that there is little harm in talking, in their own particular circles, of the failings of their neighbors*: they would not speak of these things before strangers, or society in general; but they feel no scruple in making them matter of conversation among their select friends. But these friends may not all be prudent; and if it be not desirable that the fact should not be known without the circle, the best way is, that it be not known within it. Where there is no benefit likely to be obtained by publicity, it is best, in reference to character, to lock up the secret in our own mind, and literally to observe the injunction of the prophet—"Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom."

Love, not only will not *originate*, but will not help to circulate, an evil report. When the tale comes to her, there, at least, in that direction it stops. There are gossips, who, though they would shudder at slander, and, perhaps, would not be the first to give publicity to an idle report of another, yet would feel no scruple in telling what many already know. "It is no secret," they say, "else I would not mention it." But we should not do even this: we should neither invent, nor originate, nor propagate, an evil report. While every tongue is voluble in spreading bad tidings, charity will be silent; while all seem anxious to enjoy communion in backbiting and detraction, and to sip the cup of detraction, as it passes round the company, she says to the person who has told the story, "I have no ears for defamation, or even for the tale of another's faults. Go, and affectionately speak with the individual of his failings, but do not talk of them in public." If all men acted on these principles, slander would die upon the lips which gave it birth: tale-bearers would cease, for want of customers, to carry on their trade, as pedlars in detraction; backbiting would go out of fashion; and the love of scandal be starved for want of food.

The evils, then, to which love is opposed, are—*calumny*, which invents a slanderous report to injure the reputation of another; *detraction*, which magnifies a fault; *ensoriousness*, which is too officious and too rigid in condemning it; *tale-bearing*, which propagates it; *curiosity*, which desires to know it; *maliginity*, which takes delight in it. Of this list of vices, calumny is, of course, the worst; but a tattling disposition, though it may have little of the malignity of slander, is a servant to do its work, and a tool to perpetrate its mischief. Persons of this description are far too numerous. They are to be found in every town, in every village—yes, and in every church. They are not the authors of libels, but they are the publishers; they do not draw up the placard, but only paste it up in all parts of the town; and are amenable, not for the malice which invented the defamatory lie, but for the mischief of circulating it. Their minds are a kind of common sewer, into which all the filthy streams of scandal are perpetually flowing: a receptacle of whatever is offensive and noxious. Such gossips might be pitied for their weakness, if they were not

still more to be dreaded for the injury they do.—They are not malignants, but they are mischief-makers; and, as such, should be shunned and dreaded. Every door should be closed against them, or, at least, every ear. They should be made to feel that, if silence be a penance to them, their idle and injurious tales are a much more afflictive penance to their neighbors. Now such persons would not only be rendered more safe, but more dignified by charity: this heavenly virtue, by destroying their propensity to gossiping, would rescue them from reproach, and confer upon them an elevation of character to which they were strangers before. It would turn their activity into a new channel, and make them as anxious to promote the peace of society, as they were before to disturb it by the din of their idle and voluble tongue. They would perceive that no man's happiness can be promoted by the publication of his faults; for if he be penitent, to have his failings made the butt of ridicule, is like pouring nitre and vinegar upon the deep wounds of a troubled mind; or if he be not, this exposure will do harm, by producing irritation, and by thus placing him farther off from true contrition.

If it be essential to charity, to feel a disposition to cover the faults which we witness, and to treat with tenderness and delicacy the offender, it is quite distressing to consider how little of it there is in the world. How much need have we to labor for an increase of it ourselves, and to diffuse it, both by our influence and example, that the harmony of society may not be so frequently interrupted by the lies of the slanderer, the exaggerations of the detractor, the harsh judgments of the censorious, or the idle gossip of the tale-bearer.

#### "Charity believeth all things."

NEARLY allied to the property we have just considered, and an essential part of candor, is that which follows:—"Charity believeth all things;"—*i. e.* not all things contained in the word of God,—for faith in divine testimony is not here the subject treated of,—but all things which are testified concerning our brethren; not, however, such as are testified to their disadvantage, but in their favor. This property or operation of love is so involved, and has been to such an extent illustrated, in what we have already considered, that it cannot be necessary to enlarge upon the subject. As charity regards with benevolent desire the well-being of all, it must feel naturally disposed to believe whatever can be stated in their favor. Tell a fond mother of the faults of her child: does she immediately and entirely believe the testimony? No. You will perceive an aspect of unbelief on her countenance; you will hear inquiries and doubtful insinuations from her lips: and after the clearest evidence has been adduced in support of the testimony, you will still discern that she believes you not. But on the contrary, carry to her a report of her child's *good* conduct—tell her of his achievements in wisdom or in virtue,—and you see at once the look of assent, the smile of approbation, hear the language of conviction, and, in some cases, witness a degree of confidence which amounts to weakness. How can we account for this? On the principle of the apostle, that "love believeth all things:" the mother loves her child; she is sincerely anxious for his well-being; and as our wishes have an influence upon our convictions, she is forward to believe what is said to her child's honor, and as backward to believe what is said to his discredit.

Here, then, is one of the brightest displays of charity, as exhibited in the man who believeth all things which are related to the advantage of others.

He hears the report with unfeigned pleasure, listens with the smile of approbation, the nod of assent; he does not turn to the subject of human depravity, to find ground and reason for discrediting the fact, nor does he search with inquisitive eye for some flaw in the evidence to impeach the veracity of the testimony; he does not cautiously hold his judgment in abeyance, as if afraid of believing too well of his neighbor; but, if the evidence amount to probability, he is ready to believe the account, and delights to find another and another instance of human excellence, by which he may be more reconciled and attached to the family of man, and by which he discovers that there is more goodness and happiness on earth than he knew of before.

The strongest proof and power of love, in this mode of its operation, is its disposition to believe all good reports of an *enemy* or a *rival*. Many persons can believe nothing good, but every thing bad, of those whom they consider in this light. Let them have once conceived a prejudice or a dislike; let them only have been injured or offended, opposed or humbled, by any one;—and from that moment their ears are closed against every word to his credit, and open to every tale that may tend to his disgrace. Prejudice has neither eyes nor ears for good; but is all eye and ear for evil. Its influence on the judgment is prodigious; its bewildering operation upon our convictions is really most surprising and frightful. In many cases, it gives up evidence as bright, clear, and steady, as the meridian splendor of the sun, to follow that which is as dim and delusive as the feeble light of an *ignis fatuus*. How tremblingly anxious should we be to keep the mind free from this misleading influence! How careful to obtain that candid, impartial, discriminating judgment, which can distinguish things that differ, and approve of things that are excellent, even in reference to persons that are in some respects opposed to us! This is candor; and a more important disposition of the kind we can scarcely imagine. Through that great law of our nature, which we call the association of ideas, we are too apt, when we have discovered one thing wrong in the character or conduct of another to unite with it nothing but wrong, and that continually: we scarcely ever think of him, or repeat his name, but under the malign influence of this unhappy association. What we need is more of that power of abstraction of which we have already spoken, by which we can separate the occasional act from permanent character—the bad qualities from the good ones,—and still be left at liberty to believe what is good, notwithstanding what we know of the bad.

If, in accordance with the principles of revelation, the testimony of our senses, and the evidence of experience, we believe that there is none so perfect in the view of God as to be destitute of all flaws; we at the same time believe that, so far as mere general excellence goes, there are few so bad as to be destitute of all approveable traits. It is the business of candor, to examine, to report, to believe with impartiality, and candor is one of the operations of love. This heavenly disposition forbids the prejudice which is generated by differences on the subject of religion, and enables its possessor to discredit the evil, and to believe the favorable testimony which is borne to those of other denominations and of other congregations. All excellence belongs not to our society or sect; all evil is not to be found in other societies or sects: yet how prepared are many persons to believe nothing good, or every thing bad, of other sects or other societies. Away, away, with this detestable spirit! cast it out of the church of the living God! like the legion spirit which possessed the man who dwelt among the tombs, and made him a torment to himself, and

a terror to others, this demon of prejudice has too long possessed, and torn, and infuriated, even the body of the church. "Spirit of love! descend, and expel the infernal usurper. Cast out this spoiler of our beauty, this disturber of our peace, this opponent of our communion, this destroyer of our honor. Before thy powerful yet gentle sway, let prejudice retire, and prepare us to believe all things that are reported to us to the credit of others—be they of our party or not—whether they have offended us or not—and whether in past times they have done evil or good."

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"Charity hopeth all things."

HOPE has the same reference here, as the faith just considered; it relates not to what God has promised in his word to them that love him, but to the good which is reported to exist in our neighbors.—

In a report of a doubtful matter, where the evidence is apparently against an individual, love will still hope that something may yet turn up to his advantage—that some light will yet be thrown on the darker features of the case, which will set the matter in a more favorable point of view; it will not give full credit to present appearances, however indicative they may seem to be of evil, but hope, even against hope, for the best.

If the *action* itself cannot be defended, then love will hope that the *motive* was not bad; that the intention in the mind of the actor was not so evil as the deed appeared to the eye of the spectator; that ignorance, not malice, was the cause of the transaction; and that the time will come when this will be apparent.

Love does not *speedily abandon an offender in despondency*—does not immediately give him up as incorrigible, nor soon cease to employ the means necessary for his reformation; but is willing to expect that he may yet repent and improve, however discouraging present appearances may be. Hope is the main spring of exertion; and as love means a desire for the well-being of others, it will not soon let go that hope, in the absence of which all its efforts must be paralyzed.

There are reasons which make it wise, as well as kind, to believe and hope all things for the best. *Presumptive evidence, however strong, is often fallacious*. Many circumstances in the case may look very suspicious; and yet the after-discovery of some little event may alter the aspect of the whole affair, and make the innocence of the accused far more apparent than even his guilt seemed before. The various instances in which we have ourselves been deceived by appearances, and have been led by defective, though at the time convincing, evidence, should certainly teach us caution in listening to evil reports, and dispose us to believe and hope all things.

When we consider, also, *how common is slander, detraction and tale-bearing*, we should not be hasty in forming an opinion; nor should we forget the anxiety which is often manifested by each party engaged in a contention to gain our alliance to their cause, *by being first to report the matter, and to produce an impression favorable to themselves*. Solomon has given us a proverb, the truth of which we have seen proved in a thousand instances, and which, notwithstanding, we are continually forgetting,— "He that is first in his own cause, seemeth to be just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him out." It is a proof of great weakness, so to give our ear to the first reporter, as to close it against the other party; and yet we are all prone to do this. A plausible tale produces an impression, which no



subsequent opposing testimony, though attended with far clearer evidence of truth than the first statement, can effectually obliterate. We know that every case has two aspects—we have all been experimentally acquainted with the folly of deciding till we have heard both sides; and yet, in opposition to our reason, and to our experience, we are apt to take up a prejudice upon ex-parte statements. Another circumstance, by which we are in danger of being misled in our opinion of our neighbor's conduct, is the mischievous propensity of many persons to *exaggerate* every thing they relate.—Whatever be the philosophical cause, into which a fondness for the marvellous, and a delight in exciting surprise, may be resolved, its existence, and its prevalence, are unquestionable. Perhaps, we all like to relate what is new, and strange, and interesting; not excepting even bad news. To such a pitch is this carried, by those who are deeply infected with the propensity, that they never tell any thing as they heard it: every fact is embellished or magnified. If a neighbor has displayed a little warmth of temper, they saw him raging like a fury; if he was a little cheerful after dinner, he was tripping; if he was evasive, they protest that he committed palpable falsehood, if not perjury; if he had not been so generous in his transactions as could be wished, he was an extortioner, and devoid of common honesty. Nothing is moderate and sober in the hands of such persons; every thing is extravagant, or extraordinary. All they meet with, is in the form of adventure. Out of the least incident they can construct a tale; and on a small basis of truth, raise a mighty superstructure of fiction, to interest and impress every company into which they come. Undeterred by the presence of the individual from whom they received the original fact, they will not scruple to go on magnifying and embellishing, till the author of the statement can scarcely recognize his own narrative. How strange it seems, that such people should either not know or not remember, that all this while they are telling falsehoods. They do not seem to understand, that if we relate a circumstance in such a manner as is calculated to give an impression which, either in nature or degree, does not accord with reality, we are guilty of the sin of lying. Where character is concerned, the sin is still greater, since it adds detraction to falsehood. Many a man's reputation has been frittered away by this wicked and mischievous propensity. Every narrator of an instance of misconduct, not, perhaps, heinous in the first instance, has added something to the original fact, till the offence has stood before the public eye, so blackened by this accumulative defamation, that, for a while, he has lost his character, and only partially recovered it in the end, and with extreme difficulty. Remembering the existence of such an evil, we should be backward to take up an unfavorable opinion upon first appearance; and where we cannot believe all things, be willing to hope: such is the dictate of charity, and such the conduct of those who yield their hearts to its influence.

#### CHAPTER XV.

THE SELF-DENIAL OF LOVE.

*"Love endureth all things."*

CHARITY is not fickle, unsteady, and easily discouraged; not soon disheartened, or induced to relinquish its object; but is persevering, patient, and self-denying, in the pursuance of its design to relieve the wants, assuage the sorrows, reform the vices, and allay the animosities, of those whose good it seeks. It is as patient in bearing, as it is active in doing; uniting the uncomplaining submission of

the lamb, the plodding perseverance of the ox, with the courage of the lion.

It is no frivolous and volatile affection, relinquishing its object from a mere love of change; nor is it a feeble virtue, which weakly lets go its purpose in the prospect of difficulty; nor a cowardly grace, which drops its scheme, and flees from the face of danger; no, it is the union of benevolence with strength, patience, courage, and perseverance. It has feminine beauty, and gentleness, and sweetness, united with masculine energy, and power, and heroism. To do good, it will meekly bear with the infirmities of the meanest, or will brave the scorn and fury of the mightiest. But let us survey the opposition, the difficulties, the discouragements, the provocations, which it has to bear, and which, with enduring patience it can resist.

*Sacrifices of ease, of time, of feeling, and of property*, must all be endured: for it is impossible to exercise Christian charity without making these.—He that would do good to others, without practising self-denial, does but dream. The way of philanthropy is ever up hill, and not unfrequently over rugged rocks, and through thorny paths. If we would promote the happiness of our fellow creatures, it must be by parting with something or other that is dear to us. If we would lay aside revenge when they have injured us, and exercise forgiveness, we must often mortify our own feelings. If we would reconcile the differences of those who are at variance, we must give up our time, and sometimes our comfort. If we would assuage their griefs, we must expend our property. If we would reform their wickedness, we must part with our ease. If we would, in short, do good of any kind, we must be willing to deny ourselves, and bear labor of body and pain of mind. And love is willing to do this; it braces itself for labor, arms itself for conflict, prepares itself for suffering: it looks difficulties in the face, counts the cost, and heroically exclaims,—“None of these things move me, so that I may diminish the evils, and promote the happiness, of others.” It will rise before the break of day, linger on the field of labor till midnight, toil amidst the sultry heat of summer, brave the northern blasts of winter, submit to derision, give the energies of body and the comfort of mind: all to do good.

*Misconstruction* is another thing that love endures. Some men's minds are ignorant, and cannot understand its schemes; others are contracted, and cannot comprehend them; others are selfish, and cannot approve them; others are envious, and cannot applaud them; and all these will unite, either to suspect or to condemn: but this virtue, “like the eagle, pursues its noble, lofty, heaven-bound course, regardless of the flock of little pecking cawing birds, which, unable to follow, amuse themselves by twitting their objections and ill will in the hedges below.” Or, to borrow a scriptural allusion, love, like its great pattern, when he was upon the earth, goes about doing good, notwithstanding the malignant perversion of its motives and actions on the part of its enemies. “I must do good,” she exclaims: “if you cannot understand my plans, I pity your ignorance; if you misconstrue my motives, I forgive your malignity; but the clouds that are exhaled from the earth, may as well attempt to arrest the career of the sun, as for your dulness or malevolence to stop my attempts to do good. I must go on, without your approbation, and against your opposition.”

*Envy* often tries the patience of love, and is another of the ills which it bears, without being turned aside by it. There are men who would enjoy the praise of benevolence without enduring its labors; that is, they would wear the laurel of victory without exposing themselves to the peril of war: they are sure to envy the braver, nobler spirits, whose

generous conquests, having been preceded by labor, are followed by praise. To be good, and to do good, are alike the objects of envy with many persons.—“A man of great merit,” said a French author, “is a kind of public enemy. By engrossing a multitude of applauses, which would serve to gratify a great many others, he cannot but be envied: men naturally hate what they highly esteem, yet cannot love.” The feeling of the countryman at Athens, who, upon being asked why he gave his vote for the banishment of Aristides, replied, “Because he is every where called the just,” is by no means uncommon. The Ephesians expelled the best of their citizens, with the public announcement of this reason, “If any are determined to excel their neighbors, let them find another place to do it.” Envy is that which love hates and proscribes, and, in revenge, envy hates and persecutes love in return; but the terror of envy does not intimidate love, nor its malignity disgust it: it can bear even the perversions, misrepresentations, and opposition of this fiend-like passion, and pursues its course, simply saying, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

*Ingratitude* is often the hard usage which love has to sustain, and which it patiently endures. Into such a state of turpitude is man fallen, that he would bear any weight rather than that of obligation.—Men will acknowledge small obligations, but often return malice for such as are extraordinary; and some will sooner forgive great injuries than great services. Many persons do not know their benefactors, many more will not acknowledge them, and others will not reward them, even with the cheap offering of thanks. These things are enough to make us sick of the world: yes; but ought not to make us weary of trying to mend it; for the more ungrateful it is, the more it needs our benevolence. Here is the noble, the lofty, the godlike temper of charity: it pursues its course like the providence of Jehovah, which continues to cause its sun to rise and its rain to descend, not only upon the irrational creatures, who have no capacity to know their benefactor, but upon the rational ones, many of whom have no disposition to acknowledge him.

*Derision* is often employed to oppose the efforts of love by all the artillery of scorn. Spiritual religion, and especially that view of it which this subject exhibits, has ever been an object of contempt to ungodly men. Banter and ridicule are brought to stop its progress; the greatest profaneness and buffoonery are sometimes employed to laugh it out of countenance;—but it has learned to treat with indifference even the cruel mockings of irony, and to receive upon its shield-arm all the arrows of the most envenomed wit.

*Opposition* does not disgust, nor *persevering obstinacy* weary it. It can endure to have its schemes examined and sifted by those who cannot understand them, cavilled at by those who cannot mend them, and resisted by those who have nothing to offer in their place. It does not throw all up in a fit of passion, nor suffer the tongue of petulance, nor the clamor of envy, to stop its efforts.

*Want of success*, that most discouraging consideration to activity, is not sufficient to drive it from the field; but in the expectation of the future harvest, it continues to plough and to sow in hope. Its object is too important to be relinquished for a few failures; and nothing but the demonstration of absolute impossibility can induce it to give up its benevolent purpose.

If instances of this view of Christian love be necessary to illustrate and enforce it by the power of example, many and striking ones are at hand.—Few, very few, are worthy of being put in competition with that of Mr. CLARKSON, whose illustrious name, and that of his no less illustrious coadjutor,

Mr. WILBERFORCE, will ever be pronounced with tears of gratitude by Africa, as the chief agents in the work of inducing the greatest commercial nation upon earth to abolish the infernal traffic in human beings; and ought to be recorded in letters of gold by their grateful countrymen, for having delivered the nation from the greatest crime which, in her modern history, she ever committed, and from the greatest curse which she could dread at the hands of retributive justice. Perhaps no uninspired book may be so fairly regarded as a beautiful comment on the expression, “Charity endureth all things,” as Clarkson’s “History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.” Twenty years of that good man’s life were occupied in long and fatiguing journeys, at all seasons of the year: in labors of an almost incredible extent, to trace reports to their source, to collect information, and to gather evidence; in braving opposition, bearing all kinds of ridicule, encountering savages, whose trade had made them reckless of crime, and thirsty for blood; in personal exposure, so great, that by nothing less than supernatural strength, granted for the occasion, would he have been rescued at one time from threatened and intended death. Nor was this the full measure of the endurance; disappointment the most bitter and discouraging often extinguished his brightest hopes; lukewarmness on the part of those from whom he had a right to expect the most zealous co-operation often saddened his heart, though it never paralyzed his zeal; and, to try his perseverance and put his benevolence to the severest test, his cause was of a nature which, by the sufferings it brought under review, was enough to sicken and turn from its purpose a compassion of less hardihood than his. What must that man have had to endure, who thus describes his feelings after the details of evidence furnished by only one of the thousands of days spent in familiarizing himself with the various scenes of the biggest outrage ever committed against the rights of humanity?—“The different scenes of barbarity which these represented to me, greatly added to the affliction of my mind. My feelings became now almost insupportable. I was agonized to think that this trade should last another day: I was in a state of agitation from morning till night: I determined I would soon leave the place in which I saw nothing but misery. I had collected now, I believe, all the evidence it would afford; and to stay a day longer in it than was necessary, would be only an interruption to my happiness and health.”

Who but a Christian philanthropist of the highest order could have pursued such a career, year after year, and not be so wearied by labor—so disheartened by opposition—so disgusted by cruelty,—as to abandon the object of his pursuit? Here was, indeed, a beautiful illustration of the “*love that endureth all things.*”

But a greater than Clarkson might be mentioned. Let the history of *St. Paul* be studied, and his suffering career be traced, and his declarations heard concerning his varied and heavy tribulations. “I think that God hath sent forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.” “In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths



oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Nor did these sufferings come upon him without his being previously apprized of them, for the Holy Ghost had witnessed to him that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Yet neither the prospect of his varied tribulations, nor the full weight of them, made him for a moment think of relinquishing his benevolent exertions for the welfare of mankind. His was the love that "*endureth all things.*"

And a greater, far greater than even the great apostle of the Gentiles, might be also introduced, as affording, by his conduct, a most striking illustration of this property of Christian charity. Who but himself can conceive of what the Son of God endured while he sojourned in this world? Who can imagine the magnitude of his sufferings, and the extent of that opposition, ingratitude, and hard usage, amidst which those sufferings were sustained, and by which they were so greatly increased? Never was so much mercy treated with so much cruelty; the constant labor he sustained, and the many privations to which he submitted, were little, compared with the malignant contradiction, resistance, and persecution, he received from those who were the objects of his mercy. The work of man's redemption was not accomplished, as was the work of creation; by a mere fiat delivered from the throne, on which Omnipotence reigned in the calm repose of infinite majesty: no—the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, as a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. The wrath of God, the fury of devils, the rage of man, the malignity of enemies, the wayward follies and fickleness of friends, the baseness of treachery, the scorn of official rank, and the many stings of ingratitude, calumny, and inconstancy—all poured their venom into that heart which glowed with affection to the children of men. Nothing turned him from his purpose—nothing abated his ardor in the work of our salvation. His, too, and above all others, was indeed a love which "*endureth all things.*"

Such is the model we are to copy. In doing good we must prepare ourselves for opposition, and all its attendant train of evils. Whether our object be the conversion of souls, or the well-being of man's corporeal nature—whether we are seeking to build up the temporal, or to establish the eternal, interests of mankind—we must remember that we have undertaken a task which will call for patient, self-denying, and persevering effort. In the midst of difficulties, we must not utter the vain cowardly wish, that we had not set our hand to the plough; but press onward in humble dependence upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, and animated by the hope of either being rewarded by success, or by the consciousness that we did every thing to obtain it: and we shall do this, if we possess much of the power of love; for its ardor is such, that many waters cannot quench it. Its energies increase with the difficulty that requires them, and, like a well constructed arch, it becomes more firm and consolidated by the weight it has to sustain. In short, it is "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as it knows that its labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE.

"*Charity never faileth.*"

PERMANENCE is the climax of excellence. How often has the sigh been heaved, and the tear been shed, over the perishable nature of earthly possessions. Their transient duration presented a painful contrast to their great worth, and extorted the sorrowful exclamation, Alas! that such excellence should be mortal! The charm of beauty soon fades, the force of genius is at length exhausted, the monuments of art decay; an incurable taint of corruption has infected every thing earthly, and even religion itself does not confer immortality upon every thing that belongs to its sacred economy. One thing there is, which shall remain—*for ever*, for "*charity never faileth*;" and its permanence is the crown and glory of all its other noble qualities. It is a truly immortal disposition—bearing no exclusive relation to earth or to time, but destined to pass away from the world with the souls in which it exists, to dwell in heaven, and flourish through eternity.

When it is said that it never faileth, we are not merely to understand, that being once planted in the soul, it remains there as the centre and support of all the other practical virtues: that it *will* so remain, is unquestionable, for its continuance is essential to the existence of personal and social religion. A man may change his opinions on some subjects—he may give up some sentiments once believed by him to be truth; but he cannot give up love, without ceasing to be a Christian.

Nor does the apostle mean that it remains as the spirit of Christianity till the end of time, amidst every change of external administration; that it shall so abide is unquestionable. The genius of piety is unchangeable. This was the temper obligatory upon the primitive Christian; it is obligatory upon us; and it will be no less so upon every future generation. A holier and happier age is in reserve for the church of Christ; "compared with which, invisible though it be at present, and hid behind the clouds which envelope this dark and troubled scene, the brightest day that has yet shone upon the world is midnight, and the highest splendors that have invested it the shadow of death:" but this glory shall consist in a more perfect and conspicuous manifestation of the grace of love. It is in this, combined with a clearer perception of the truth, that the Christians of the millennium will surpass those of every preceding age.

But the apostle's reference is evidently to another world: his eye was upon heaven, and he was looking at things unseen and eternal, when he said that "*charity never faileth.*" He was then soaring on the wing of faith, and exploring the scenes of eternity, among which he saw this celestial plant, surviving the dissolution of the universe, outliving the earthly state of the church, transplanted to the paradise of God, and flourishing in the spirits of just men made perfect near the fountain of light and love.

To give still greater emphasis to what he says of its continuance, he contrasts it with some things, which, however highly valued by the Corinthian believers, were of a transient duration, and, therefore, of greatly inferior value to this.

"*Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.*" By prophecies here, we are to understand inspired interpretation of the Scriptures; all new revelations from God, by oral or written communication, for the instruction and edification of the saints. These, so far from belonging to the heavenly state of the church, did not survive its primitive ages. The

gift of inspiration was soon withdrawn, the oracle of prophecy was hushed, and all further responses from heaven were denied.

"Whether there be tongues they shall cease." This, of course, refers to the miraculous power of speaking any language without previous study. This gift also ceased with the other extraordinary endowments of the primitive ages, and bears no relation to the heavenly world. Whether the communication of ideas in the celestial state will be carried on by speech, is, at present, unknown to us; if it be so, what the language will be is beyond conjecture.

"Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." This expression most probably refers to what is called, in the preceding chapter, "the word of knowledge;" and of which the apostle speaks in the beginning of this chapter—"Though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing." It means an inspired knowledge of the types, predictions, and mysteries, of the Old Testament, and of their accomplishment by the facts of the Christian economy. This, also, was among the signs and wonders which were to vanish away; which, having been granted as attestations to the divine authority of the word of God, and for the edification of the church, were discontinued when the canon of Scripture was completed and settled.

Some extend the apostle's reasoning so far, as to include every kind of our present knowledge; which, as to its imperfect attainments, and inadequate mediums, and present modes of communications, shall be removed, and give place to a more easy and perfect method of acquiring truth, and a more entire comprehension of its nature and relations.

As to the knowledge of the arts of the practical sciences and of literature, this shall be lost and forgotten, as utterly useless, and as bearing no relation whatever to the celestial state. Ye master spirits, ye commanding geniuses, ye lordly minds, who exhaust the force of your intellect, and lavish its treasures upon themes of mere earthly interest—see here the termination of all your labors. Scholars, poets, painters, sculptors, warriors, ye who assemble in the temple of fame, amidst the mightiest productions of human skill, to pay homage to each other, to receive the admiration of the world, and to immortalize your names—giving to your mighty works the full measure of their value, in reference to earth and to time—admitting that, in this view, they are bright scenes in the history of man; yet still, in reference to heaven and its eternity, they are nothing—less than nothing—and vanity. Not an angel would turn to gaze upon the noblest production of human imagination, nor will a plea be put in by a single inhabitant of heaven, to exempt from the destruction of the last fire the sublimest specimens of human skill. Myriads of volumes have been already lost and forgotten; myriads more are on their way to oblivion; myriads still shall rise, only to vanish;—and of all the accumulations that shall have been made by the time of the millennium, and which shall have been going on through the longest and the purest age of reason—not one shall be saved from the general conflagration, as worthy to be borne to the heavenly world. "Knowledge shall vanish away."

But not only shall the knowledge contained in the scientific, and literary, and imaginative, productions of men vanish, together with the volumes by which it was circulated; but all theological works—our creeds, our catechisms, our articles of faith, our bodies of divinity, our works of biblical criticism, our valued, and justly valued, commentaries—our sermons, and our treatises—all shall va-

nish. The knowledge we gain from these sources is not that which will attend us to the skies, and be sufficient for us when we have arrived at the region of cloudless splendor, the element of wisdom, the native land, and dwelling-place of truth.

The introduction of this idea, by the apostle, has given occasion for one of the most striking digressions from his tract of thought which he ever made. His argument only required him to state that love is better than the gift of knowledge, because the latter shall cease; but he proceeds to show why it shall cease, and ascribes its continuance to its imperfection: he then takes an opportunity to draw one of the most sublime contrasts to be found in the word of God, between our knowledge in the present world, and our more perfect comprehension of truth in the world that is to come.

And why shall knowledge vanish away? because

"We know in part, and we prophesy in part."

A part only of truth is made known, and, therefore, a part only is received by us. This may imply that *there are many things we do not know at all.* Who can doubt this? Upon the supposition that we are perfectly acquainted with all that is proper to be known, all that could be acquired by the aid of reason and the discoveries of revelation, still we should hear a voice, saying to us, "Lo, these are a part of his ways, but the thunder of his power who can understand?" There are, doubtless, truths of vast importance and of deep interest, which have never yet approached, and, in the present world, never will approach, the horizon of the human understanding. There are paths in the region of truth which the vulture's eye has not seen, and which are hid from the view of all living.

When, on his death-bed, the great NEWTON was congratulated upon the discoveries he had made, he replied, with the modesty usually attendant on vast attainments, "I have been only walking on the shores of truth, and have, perhaps, picked up a gem or two, of greater value than others; but the vast ocean itself lies all before me." This is strictly correct in reference to the material universe, to which the remark was intended to apply. Of *natural* truth, the ocean, with its depths, its islands, and the continents and kingdoms to which it leads, is all before us. We have only looked upon the surface, and seen some of the objects passing upon it: we have only seen a few land-marks, on one part of one of its shores; but the infinitude of its ample space, and the innumerable objects which that space contains, are yet to be explored. And with respect to the *spiritual* world, although we possess, in the volume of inspiration, a revelation of the most sublime, important, and interesting objects of knowledge: yet probably, there are truths of which, after all that divines and philosophers have written, we can form no more conception, than we can of the objects of a sixth sense, or than a blind man can of colors. "We know only in part."

It is implied also that what we do know, *we know but imperfectly.* In some cases, our knowledge is uncertainty, and amounts only to opinion; faith is weak, and mixed with many doubts. We cannot exultingly exclaim, "I know;" we can scarcely say, "I believe." The object sometimes presents itself to our mind, like the sun seen dimly through a mist—now appearing, and then lost again, in the density of the fog. Now a truth comes upon us, in a thin and shadowy form; we think we see it, but it is again obscured. We only see glimmerings. We perceive appearances, rather than demonstrations; dark outlines, not perfect pictures.

And where no doubt undermines the *certainly* of our knowledge, what dark limits bound its *extent*,



We walk, as through a valley shut in on each side by lofty mountains, whose tops are lost amidst the clouds, whose shadows add to the obscurity of our situation, and whose mighty masses stand between us and the prospect which lies beyond. How imperfect and limited is our knowledge of the great God—of the spirituality of his nature—of his necessary self-existence from eternity—of his triune essence! How feeble are our conceptions of the complex person of Christ, the God-man Mediator; of the scheme of providence, embracing the history of our world, and of all other worlds; and of the connection between providence and redemption! How have divines and philosophers been perplexed on the subject of the entrance of moral evil; on the agreement between divine prescience, and the freedom of the human will; between moral inability, and human accountability! How much obscurity hangs, in our view, over many of the operations of nature! how soon do we arrive at ultimate laws, which, for aught we can tell, may be only the effects of causes that are hidden from our observation! In what ignorance do we live, of many of the most common occurrences around us. Who has perfect ideas of the essences of things, separate and apart from their qualities—of matter, for instance, or spirit? Who can perfectly conceive how the idea of motion results from that of body, or how the idea of sensation results from that of spirit? On what theme shall we meditate, and not be mortified to find how little progress we can make before we are arrested by insurmountable difficulties? On what eminence shall we take our stand, and to what part of the horizon direct our eye, and not see clouds and shadows resting like a veil upon the prospect? How truly is it said, "We know but in part." Angels must wonder at the limitation of our ideas; and disembodied spirits must be astonished at the mighty bound they make, by that one step which conducts them across the threshold of eternity.

The apostle illustrates the present imperfection of our knowledge, compared with its future advancement, by two similitudes. The first is, *the difference between the ideas of a child and those of a man.* "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." The meaning of Paul in this verse is—that our knowledge in the heavenly state will be as different from, and as superior to, any thing we gain on earth, as the ideas of an adult, in the maturity of his intellectual powers, are to those which he entertained when he was a child. Our knowledge at present, is that of children; we are not only in the minority, but in the *infancy*, of our minds. Our notions are the opinions of children; our discourses are the lisplings of children; our controversies are the reasonings of children. The prodigious attainments of those great luminaries, Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, Newton; and in the science of theology, of those great divines, Owen, Howe, Charneck, Baxter, Bates, Butler, Hooker;—all these are but the productions of children, written for the instruction of others less taught than themselves. Yea, the apostle includes *himself and his writings* in the description—"We know in part, and we prophesy in part. When I was a child, I spake as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." He alludes to his own childish conceits, and puerile simplicity, which had given way to the matured knowledge of his riper years; and, by implication, declares his expectation, that the knowledge which he should gain in the celestial state would be as much above his present views, as they were beyond those which he entertained when he was a child.—Yes, that greatest of mere men—that illustrious individual who had been in the third heaven—who

had explored, as we imagine, some of the secrets of the unseen world—who had fathomed so much of the depth, measured so much of the height, of truth; even *he* tells us, that *he* was but in his minority.—What an idea does it give us of the infinitude of knowledge yet to be obtained, when we are informed that the Bible itself, even the New Testament, that book of books, the work of which it is said, it has God for its author, truth without any mixture of error, for its contents, and salvation for its end, is but a book for children, a work for saints in their infancy, a mere elementary treatise on the subject of eternal truth, written by the finger of God, for his family, during their education and novitiate on earth.

The second similitude, by which the present imperfection of our knowledge is set forth, is that very partial acquaintance which we gain with material objects, by looking at them through a glass. "Now we see through a glass, darkly."

Considerable diversity of opinion prevails as to the precise object of the apostle's allusion in the expression which he here employs. It is admitted that the word in the original literally signifies a mirror; and hence most expositors consider that the comparison is to this article, and that his meaning is, that our knowledge of divine truth in this world, is only of that partial kind which we gain by seeing objects reflected from a mirror. But does this accord with his design, which is to represent the *obscurity* of our present ideas, compared with what we shall know hereafter, when that which is perfect is come? The knowledge we gain of an object that is reflected from a highly polished surface is too accurate to furnish such a comparison. Hence some are of opinion—and this is the view I take—that the allusion is to those semi-transparent substances, such as horn and diaphanous stones, which were used in windows before glass was known, and through which objects would be but very dimly seen. Nothing could better accord with the apostle's purpose than this. How dim and shadowy do those forms appear, which we discover through such a medium: we discern only the mere outline; every thing is seen imperfectly, and many things connected with the object are not seen at all. "We see it through a glass, darkly." The term rendered "darkly" signifies an enigma, a riddle, a form of speech in which one thing is put for another; which, though in some respects like it, is but an obscure representation, and calculated to puzzle those who are required to find out the thing which is thus darkly shadowed forth.

Here it may be proper to inquire why divine truth is at present involved in so much comparative darkness.

It is *designed to accord with the analogy of faith.* We are to walk by faith, which is not only opposed to the testimony of the sense, but is distinguished also from the clearness and certainty of perfect knowledge.

It *comports also with the purpose of a divine revelation.* There is no doubt but that some of the clouds which envelope the subjects of revealed truth could have been dissipated, and many things put in a still clearer light. A studied caution, a designed reserve, is maintained in some places; for as the Bible is given to be a test of moral disposition, the evidence should be sufficient to demand belief, without being enough to compel it. The Bible affords us light enough to assist us in discharging the duties of this world, and to guide us to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life; but it concedes nothing to curiosity, nothing to a spirit of restless inquiry. It stands like a waymark on the high road to eternity, and is intended simply to announce what is truth, and the way to its dwelling-place, but not to make known to

the traveller all the details of the city to which he is journeying.

And, in another view, this obscurity is *absolutely necessary*. If the disclosure were *more* obscure, it would be beyond our apprehension; we could know nothing; and, in that case, religion could have no existence, or exist only as the blind offspring of ignorance. If it were more cloudy and shadowy, it would have no power to arrest attention or interest the heart: it might, indeed, point to a brighter state, where it would throw off the dense covering in which it had enwrapped itself on earth; but too little of the beauty of truth would be seen to captivate our affections, and to allure us to follow her to that world where she displays her unveiled glories; but as revelation is now given to us, enough of the beauty of truth is seen, to inspire us with a true affection; enough is concealed, to make us long to see her face to face. And were all the knowledge that it is possible for us to receive, actually communicated to us, *who, amidst such acquisitions, could attend to the low pursuits of ordinary affairs?* The immediate effect of such a disclosure would be to produce, so far as real Christians are concerned, a total stagnation of the affairs of this life. All the studies and pursuits, the arts and the labors, which now employ the activity of man—which support order, or promote happiness—would lie neglected and abandoned. It is necessary that something of the magnitude of truth should be concealed—something of its effulgence softened—something of its beauty veiled; or the holy mind of the Christian, absorbed in such a vision, would find all that is important in life utterly insignificant, and all that is attractive tasteless and insipid. Disturbed in his lofty meditations, and interrupted in his ecstasies, by the din of business, and the obtrusion of low, grovelling cares, and judging that scenes of secular activity unfitted him for communion with this heavenly visitant,—he would retire from the social haunts of men, to converse with truth in the solitude of the hermitage or the silence of the desert. So necessary is it to hang a veil on the too dazzling brightness of divine subjects.

This partial obscurity is also necessary, *on account of the feebleness and limited extent of our faculties*. Our minds could no more bear to look upon the unmitigated glory of divine truth, than the eye of an infant could sustain the unsoftened effulgence of the mid-day sun. Our minds cannot grasp, in its full extent, one single subject out of all the mighty theory. Some vague idea may be formed of the almost illimitable range of this plan, when we recollect that its development is to employ our understanding in the highest state of intellectual perfection, and to employ it, not for a measured term, but through the countless ages of an endless existence. The study, the discovery, the enjoyment, of truth, will form one of the chief felicities of the heavenly state: but what must that knowledge be, which is to afford something new and interesting through eternity? how can this be obtained by man in the infancy of his existence upon earth? There are subjects yet to be known, which would have no less surpassed the understanding of Newton, than his profound discoveries in science would the mind of a child.

No wonder, then, that we walk at present amidst shades and glimmerings. But how humbling is this view of the subject to the pride of intellect! "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." The thinking mind is the glory of our nature; it is the candle of the Lord shining "in the earthly house of our tabernacle," and giving light to all the faculties of our soul, to guide their operations, and to direct them in their appropriate business. To what an immea-

surable elevation does it raise man above the brute creation! What wonders it has achieved—what stupendous monuments of wisdom and power it has raised! Who can mention the names of the giants of the world of mind, and especially who can survey the productions of their genius, without having high notions of the capacities of the human understanding? But what are all the works of the greatest theologians, the profoundest philosophers, when compared with the knowledge of another world, but as the ideas of one who "thought as a child, and spake as a child!" Shall *any* man, shall the greatest of men, be proud of *their* modicum of knowledge, vain of *their* childish notions, puffed up with their poor scantling of information? Were the meanest and least of all the spirits of just men made perfect, to come down and catechise a synod of the greatest divines on earth, how soon would he confound them amidst their most sagacious discoveries and most celebrated works. What infantine conceptions, what puerile conceits, could be found out in their most finished productions! So little reason has man for the pride of understanding—so much cause to clothe himself with the garment of humility.

#### HEAVEN A STATE OF PERFECT KNOWLEDGE.

*"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know but in part; but then shall I know, even as I am known."*

ALL these expressions refer to the celestial world, and unite to teach us that heaven is a state of perfect knowledge. Here we know only part of truth; then we shall know the whole: here we know nothing but in a partial manner: there we shall know every thing completely: here we see truth, only as we perceive the dark shadow of a man, through a dense medium; there we shall behold it as clearly as we do the same man when we see him face to face; there we shall know truth, even as we are known by superior beings, *i. e.* with as much certainty, though not with the same comprehension.

This last expression has been sometimes explained, as conveying the intimation that we shall recognize each other in the celestial state. "We shall know others, even as we are known by them." Many reasons concur to produce the expectation of this mutual recognition. It is almost impossible to suppose that we shall maintain our identity, not only of person but of character; and also the reminiscence of our earthly existence and history; without believing the interesting truth, that we shall again be mutually known to each other in the heavenly world. This is one of the sentiments which the sacred writers rather take for granted than stop to prove. But certainly this is not the meaning of the passage now under consideration. The apostle here speaks of our knowledge of things, not of persons.

The felicity of the celestial state will, doubtless, include every thing that can yield delight to a corporeal, social, intellectual, and moral creature. It is eternal life—everlasting existence, attended by every thing that can render existence, a blessing.—It is life, in the fullest sense of the term—life in the highest degree of perfection. The glorified body will probably retain the organs of sound and sight,—the purest of the senses,—and thus become the met of the most pleasurable sensations; while it will be for ever free from the cravings of appetite, the languor of sickness, the distress of pain, the weariness of labor. The social impulse will be gratified by the sublime converse of "the innumerable com-



pany of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect." The moral feelings will all combine in the most unsullied purity; while the intellect will be irradiated by the light of eternal truth. The heart will thus repose in the enjoyment of the chief good, and the mind in the contemplation of the first truth; beyond which nothing remains to be enjoyed—nothing to be known.

But we are now considering heaven under the representation of a state of knowledge, and as an *intellectual* condition. In this light the Scriptures frequently speak of the glory to be revealed. They call it an inheritance "in light;" they describe it as a world where there is no night. There "we shall see him as he is," "behold his glory," "see him face to face;" expressions which relate more to the eyes of the mind than to those of the body. Perhaps we do not sufficiently contemplate heaven in this view of it. The greater part of mankind are taken up with mere sensations, and are but little acquainted with the pure enjoyment connected with the perception of evidence and the apprehension of truth. The rapturous exclamation, "I have found it!" is rarely uttered by the multitude, over any thing but the acquisition of wealth or the gratification of appetite. But those who have been engaged in any measure in intellectual pursuits, will be able to appreciate the pleasures of knowledge. Evidence is to the mind like light to the eye, and the perception of truth, as water to the thirsty. Even the comparatively barren sciences of numbers and figures, which exclude the operation of the fancy, and present nothing to exercise the passions or gratify the imagination, the truths of which derive all their interest from the evidence by which they are supported, or the manner in which they are applied to other purposes;—yes; even these are a source of high and pure enjoyment to the human mind, which is ever seeking to arrive at infallible certainty, and can repose nowhere else. What exquisite delight has been experienced by some men, when, after a long process of reasoning, or a fatiguing course of experiments, they have at length arrived at a demonstration. If, then, in the present world, where the subjects of our research are often so insignificant, where our knowledge is obtained with such labor, is limited by so much ignorance, and blended with so much error; if amidst such circumstances the pleasure of knowledge be so great,—what will it be in the heavenly state?

Let us consider what will be the objects of our knowledge.

If we may be allowed the expression, we shall know all things that are knowable, so far as an acquaintance with them will contribute to our felicity. We shall know every thing that is essential to the right performance of duty, or to the most perfect gratification of our intellect—all that lies within our proper sphere or compass as creatures.

We shall perfectly comprehend all the laws which govern the material world. The discovery of these are now considered to be among the most dignified and gratifying employments of the human understanding. It was his discoveries in natural philosophy which gave to our great Newton his celebrity. What a high station in the records of fame is assigned to Linneus, La Place, Davy, and Watt, and to others, who have explored the secrets and explained the laws of nature! They are ranked among the illustrious members and most valuable benefactors of their species. They are looked up to with a kind of semi-idolatry, and their praises are continually chanted for their vast achievements, not only in adding to the stock of knowledge, but in accumulating fresh honors upon human nature.—What sublime and astonishing facts are included in the sciences of astronomy, optics, chemistry! how

much of power, wisdom, and goodness, of the divine Architect are displayed in the works of creation!—yet these things are now hidden from a great portion of the redeemed, who, by the disadvantages of their education, are shut out from these sources of knowledge. But they will be admitted to them in heaven. Creation will not be destroyed at the judgment day, but only purified. The vast and splendid machine will not then be thrown aside, broken up, and consigned to oblivion. Nothing which the hand of the Creator hath framed shall be forgotten. The brilliant scenes which are now passing before our eyes, but on which many, even regenerated minds look without understanding them, are not a mere pageant. Beautiful was the remark of the eminently pious Bishop Hall, who, on being told in his old age, that his views of astronomy were not quite correct, replied, "Well! it may be so; but I am soon going to heaven, and as I shall take the stars in my way, I must leave the subject till then, when every mistake will be rectified." So completely will all the disadvantages of our earthly condition be removed in heaven, whether those disadvantages arise from the Christian being born in an age when knowledge is in its infancy, or amidst those privations of property which deny him access to the sources of information. In the hour of death, the pious but illiterate tenant of the cottage, on whose mind the orb of science never rose, though the sun of righteousness poured upon it the light of a spiritual illumination, ascends above the disadvantages of education, makes a glorious transition from the shades of ignorance, in which he dwelt upon earth, into the cloudless transparency of the firmament on high. His natural faculties, compressed and enfeebled now by the circumstances of his birth, shall then expand to a comprehension, and attain to a vigor, probably not surpassed by the loftiest of the human race: and he, too, shall know in heaven, the works of the God of nature, as he knew below, and shall still better know above, the works of the God of grace.

*Providence* will form another mighty range of inquiry, and another source of delightful knowledge in heaven. By providence, we mean God's moral government of the universe—the course of the divine administration towards rational and moral creatures: that mighty scheme, which commenced its application before time was born, or the foundations of the earth were laid; which embraces the annals of other worlds besides ours; which includes the history of angels, men, and devils. Providence comprises the whole range of events, which have taken place from the formation of the first creature, to the last moment of time, with all the tendencies, reasons, connections, and results, of things; the separate existence of each individual, with the continuation and influence of the whole, in one harmonious scheme. Providence is now full of mysteries. We are puzzled at almost every step. Innumerable are the events over which, after having in vain endeavored to sound their depth with the line of our reason, we must exclaim, "O the depth!" But we shall know all; why sin was permitted, and how it entered, with all the attendant train of incomprehensible results which followed its introduction into the moral universe. It will then be made apparent to us, why so long a period elapsed between the first promise of a Saviour, and his incarnation, sufferings, and death: why, for so many ages, the world was left in ignorance, sin, and misery: why such errors were permitted to enter the church; and so soon, and so extensively, to corrupt the simplicity and deform the beauty of the Christian profession: why the man of sin was suffered to establish his seat in the temple of Christ; to exalt himself above all that is called God; to utter his

blasphemy; to shed the blood of the saints; and so long to spread the clouds of superstition, and the shades of death, over Christendom: why the impostor of Mecca was allowed to arise, and for so many ages to render a large portion of the earth inaccessible to the rays of the Sun of Righteousness: why idolatry, with all its sanguinary deities, and all its bloody and obscene rites, was left so long to insult the heavens, to pollute the earth, and to curse mankind. What deep unfathomable mysteries are these! How confounding to our reason, and how utterly beyond our research! What astonishment and delight, what inconceivable emotions, will be produced by the gradual unfolding of the mighty scheme, by the progressive discoveries of the connections and issues of things, and the wondrous display of divine glory which will be made by the whole. How shall we be enraptured to find, that those events which now so confound us, were dark only by excess of wisdom, and that those facts which so often distressed us upon earth were but the more sombre shades of the perfect picture!—What manifestations of Deity will then be made, when God shall admit us to his cabinet, and lay open to us the arcana of his government!

And, doubtless, we shall not only see the harmony and wisdom of Providence, in its general aspect and its more comprehensive combinations and arrangements, but in its *particular bearing on our own private and personal history*. The most important and interesting chapter in the volume of universal history is, to us, that which contains the record of *our life*. What clouds and shadows still rest, and in the present state ever must rest, upon our obscure and humble annals. How often is Jehovah, in his dealings with us, a God that hideth himself! how often does he wrap himself in clouds, and pursue his path upon the waters, where we can neither see his goings nor trace his footsteps! How many of his dispensations are inexplicable! and of his judgments, how many are unfathomable by the short line of our reason! But whatever we know not now, we shall know hereafter: the crooked will be made straight, the cloud of darkness will be scattered, and all his conduct towards us placed in the broad daylight of eternity. We shall see the connection which our individual history bears with the general scheme of providence; and perceive how, notwithstanding our insignificance, our existence was no less necessary to the perfection of the whole plan than that of the great ones of the earth. We shall see how all the varying and numerous, and seemingly opposite, events of our history were combined into one gracious purpose of mercy, which was most perfectly wise in all its combinations: now we believe that "all things work together for good;" then we shall see *how* this end was accomplished by events, which, at the time put us to so much grief, and involved us in so much surprise. Delightful, most delightful will it be, to retrace our winding and often gloomy course, and discern at each change and turning the reason of the occurrence, and the wisdom of God; delightful will it be, to discern the influence which all our temporal circumstances, all our disappointments, losses, and perplexities, had upon our permanent and celestial happiness. How much of divine wisdom, power, goodness and faithfulness, will our short and humble history present; and what rapturous fervor will the discovery give to the song of praise which we shall utter before the throne of God and the Lamb.

*Revelation*, as containing the scheme of human redemption by Jesus Christ, will be another object of our study, and source of knowledge. The Bible is given to make God known; and one page of the Bible, yea one verse, makes known more of God than all the volume of nature. But, after all, how

little do we know of God, of his essence, of his triune mode of subsistence, of his natural perfections, of his moral attributes? What an unfathomable mystery is Deity! In what a pavilion of darkness does Jehovah dwell! Who, by searching, can find out God? In heaven we shall know him, for we shall see him face to face; we shall behold his glory, and see him as he is. We shall have as perfect an acquaintance with the divine character, as a finite mind can attain to; and in this one object, shall find employment and bliss through eternity. We shall never exhaust this theme. Eternity is necessary to study that which is infinite.

We shall then comprehend, so far as it can be done by a finite mind, the complex person of Jesus Christ. We cannot now understand this; "Great is the mystery of godliness,—God manifest in the flesh;" but what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. Then will the cross be seen, as the central point of the divine administration, bright with ten thousand glories, and sending out its beams to the extremity of the moral system. The ruin of the world by its federal connection with Adam: the election of the Jews, and the long abandonment of the Gentiles; the slow advance of Christianity to its millennial reign and triumph; the bearing of redemption upon other orders of beings beside man; the difficulties which hang like impenetrable clouds upon the doctrines of personal election, regeneration, perseverance, the freedom of the will viewed in connection with divine prescience and predestination;—all, all will be laid open to the view of glorified saints in heaven. Every thing in the Scriptures, which is now dark, shall be made light. A reconciling point shall be found for every seeming contradiction, and the faith and patience of the saints be rewarded, for having received the truth on the credit of him who spoke it, without demanding to see before they believed.

Such shall be the sources of knowledge in heaven. O the bliss of eternally drinking in knowledge from such fountains!

We may now consider THE ADVANTAGES which the heavenly state will possess for the acquisition of knowledge.

*The soul will there be perfect in holiness, and thus the understanding will be delivered from the disturbing and bewildering influence of sin*. In our present state of imperfection, the depravity of our nature contracts and misdirects our judgment: the corruptions of the heart send up a mist, which veils the lustre of truth, and conceals its extent and glory from the mind. The judgment cannot now see spiritual objects in all their range, and order, and beauty, because of sin. But in heaven this contracting and darkening influence will cease for ever. No evil bias, no sinful prejudice, will ever warp the judgment: no disease of the soul will dim its eye or enfeeble its power. With eagle pinion it will soar to the fountain of radiance, and with eagle vision bear the full blaze of its glory. *The natural faculty of the mind will then attain to its full maturity of strength*. The mind is here in its infancy: there it will come to its age. Even the intellects of the greatest geniuses, while on earth, are but human minds in childhood, as we have already considered, and their most prodigious efforts but as infantine exercises. Here they only tried their powers: but in heaven the mind will put forth to their full extent all those wondrous faculties which are now shut up and compressed in our nature, for want of room and opportunity to expand. In heaven, we shall not be diverted and called off from the pursuit of truth by the inferior interests of the body: the soul will not be prevented from making excursions into the regions of light, by the cares, wants, and anxieties, which abound in this state of



being, but will be left at leisure to pursue her sublime researches. She will have nothing to hinder the acquirement and enjoyment of knowledge. To crown all, heaven is an *eternal state*, and everlasting ages will be afforded through which the glorified mind will carry on its pursuits. Were the term of human life again protracted to the antediluvian age, what vast attainments would be made by us all in the discovery of truth! What, then, must it be to have eternity through which to grow in knowledge?

We might notice the *CHARACTERS* of our knowledge. It will be *perfect*: by which we are not to understand that it will be as complete as the nature of things admits of, for we should then possess a comprehension equal to that of God. We cannot perfectly know every thing as it may be known: our ideas of many things must be limited, especially those which relate to the divine nature. By perfection, we mean freedom from error: our knowledge will be free from all admixture of doubt, suspense and fallacy; our attainments will be bounded only by our capacity; there will, perhaps, be a gradation of mind in heaven, no less obviously marked than that which exists on earth; but all capacities will be filled.

Our knowledge will doubtless be *progressive*.—Increase of ideas is, perhaps, in the case of a creature, essential to felicity. We now find more pleasure in receiving a new and important truth, than we experience in all we before possessed. A state in which there remains nothing more to be known, conveys not an idea of happiness so vividly as that where the delight of discovering something new is ever added to the joy of contemplating so much that is old. What a view of heaven!—An eternal advance in the most important knowledge; an everlasting accumulation of ideas; an interminable progression in truth. In the march of the mind through intellectual and moral perfection, there is no period set: this perfection of the just is for ever carrying on—is carrying on, but shall never come to a close. God shall behold his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, for ever drawing near to himself, yet still infinitely distant from him, the fountain of all goodness. There is not in religion a more joyful or triumphant consideration than this perpetual progress which the soul makes in the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at its ultimate period. Here truth has the advantage of fable. No fiction, however bold, presents to us a conception so elevating and astonishing as this interminable line of heavenly excellence. To look upon the glorified spirit, as going on from strength to strength, adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge; making approaches to goodness which is infinite; for ever adorning the heavens with new beauties, and brightening in the splendors of moral glory through the ages of eternity;—has something in it so transcendent, as to satisfy the most unbounded ambition of an immortal spirit. Christian! does not thy heart glow at the thought that there is a time marked out in the annals of heaven, when thou shalt be what the angels now are; when thou shalt shine with that glory in which principalities now appear; and when, in full communion with the Most High, thou shalt “see him as he is?”

How our knowledge in heaven will be *acquired*, whether by testimony, by immediate revelation, or by some method of mental application, it would be idle to speculate. We know that whatever mode is determined upon by God, will promote, and not interrupt, our felicity; we shall have nothing of the weariness of study—nothing of the anxiety of doubt—nothing of the torture of suspense. Ideas will flow into the soul with the same ease and plea-

sure on our part as rays of light come to the bodily eye.

Whatever knowledge we gain in heaven will be *transforming*: it will not be mere opinion, or unimportant speculation. All our ideas will be as fuel, to feed the flame of love, which will then burn upon the altar of the soul: all will be quickening, penetrating, influential. Our opinions will be principles of action. Every thing will lead us to see more of God, to love him with a more intense glow of holy affection, and to be more conformed to him. The light of truth will ever be associated with the warmth of love. “We shall be like God, for we shall see him as he is.”

It is difficult to find, in the volume of revelation, a stronger internal evidence of its divine original, than the view it gives of the celestial state, combining, as it does, the perfection of knowledge and of purity. Every other representation which has been given of heaven, bears the mark of an earthly source,—the proof of being a human device.—As, in seeking for a Deity, man found the prototype in his own passions, when he had abandoned the one living and true God; so, in forming a heaven, he collected all the materials from the objects of his own fleshly delights. The Elysium of the Greeks and the Romans; the Hall of the Scandinavians; the Paradise of Mohammedans; the fantastic abodes of the departed Hindoos;—are all adapted to their depraved appetites, and were suggested by their corrupt imaginations. Beyond the pleasures of a seraglio, of a field of glory, or of a hall resounding with the shout of victory—beyond the gratification of sense—man, when left to himself, never looked for the happiness which is to constitute his paradise. A heaven made up of perfect knowledge, and of perfect love, is a vision entirely and exclusively divine, and which never beamed upon the human understanding till the splendid image came upon it from the word of God. How worthy of God is such a representation of celestial bliss! It is an emanation from his own nature, as thus described:—“God is light: God is love.” The glorious reality is evidently the provision of his own wisdom and grace; and the sublime description of it in the Scriptures, is as evidently the delineation of his own finger.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE PRE-EMINENCE OF LOVE.

“Now abide these three, Faith, Hope, Charity; but the greatest of these is Charity.”

SUCH is the triune nature of true religion, as described by an inspired penman; of that religion about which myriads of volumes have been written, and so many controversies have been agitated.—How short and how simple the account; within how narrow a compass does it lie; and how easily understood, might one have expected, would have been a subject expressed in terms so familiar as these. This beautiful verse has furnished the arts with one of their most exquisite subjects: poets have sung the praises of faith, hope, and charity; the painter has exhibited the holy three in all the glowing colors of his pencil; and the sculptor has given them in the pure and almost breathing forms of his marble; while the orator has employed them as the ornaments of his eloquence. But our orators, poets, sculptors, and painters, have strangely misunderstood them, and too often proved that they knew nothing of them but as the abstractions of their genius: what they presented to the eye were mere earthly forms, which bore no resemblance to

these divine and spiritual graces: and multitudes have gazed, with admiration kindling into rapture, on the productions of the artist, who at the same time had no taste for the virtues described by the apostle. Religion is a thing essentially different from a regard to classic elegance, not indeed that it is opposed to it, for, as it refines the heart, it may be supposed to exert a favorable influence on the understanding, and by correcting the *moral* taste, to give a still clearer perception of the sublime and the beautiful. It is greatly to be questioned, however, whether religion has not received more injury than benefit from the fine arts; whether men have not become carelessly familiar with the more awful realities of truth, by the exhibition of the poet, the painter, and the engraver; and whether they have not mistaken those sensibilities which have been awakened by a contemplation of the more tender and touching scenes of revelation, as described upon the canvass or the marble, for the emotions of true piety. Perhaps the "Paradise Lost" has done very little to produce any serious concern to avoid everlasting misery; "The Descent from the Cross" by Rubens, or the "Transfiguration" by Raphael, as little, to draw the heart to the great objects of Christianity. Innumerable representations, and many of them very splendid productions too, have been given of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and doubtless by these means many kindly emotions have been called for a while into exercise, which, after all, were nothing but a transient effect of the imagination upon the feelings. It is of vast consequence that we should recollect that no affections are entitled to the character of religion, but such as are excited by a distinct perception of revealed truth. It is not the emotion awakened by a picture presented to the eye, nor by a sound addressed to the ear, but by the contemplation of a fact, or a statement, laid before the mind, that constitutes piety. We now proceed to the subject of this chapter.

FAITH is the belief of testimony, accompanied, if the testimony be delivered by a living individual, by a disposition to depend upon his veracity; and, if it relate to something in which we are interested, with an expectation of the fulfilment of the promise. In reference to spiritual things, it means a firm persuasion of the truth of what God has revealed in his word. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" or, as the passage is rendered by some, "Faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." It is a belief, not only that the Bible is true, but of the truth contained in the Bible: it is not merely a perception of the evidences of Christianity, as a divine revelation, but also a perception of the truth of its doctrines. *General* faith, means a belief of all that God has revealed in the Scriptures, whether it be invitation or promise, command or threatening, prophecy or history; and it is this that the apostle describes in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Faith in Christ, or *justifying* faith relates to that part of the divine word which testifies concerning the person and work of the Redeemer. Saving belief takes into its view every thing contained in the word of God, but its special object is the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world: just as the eye of a condemned criminal, at the place of execution, beholds the assembled multitude, the fatal tree, and the messenger whom he sees hastening with the reprieve; but it is on the latter that his view is fixed with the greatest steadiness and delight. Faith in Christ, then, is a full persuasion of the truth of the glorious gospel concerning *Him*, accompanied by a full confidence in his veracity, and an expectation of the fulfilment of his word. It is not a mere notion, a

purely intellectual act; but certainly implies an exercise of the will. It is the belief of something spoken by a living person, and necessarily involves a confidence in *his* veracity; it is something interesting to *us*, and must contain expectation. Hence it is represented by the apostle as synonymous with the act of committing the soul into the hands of Christ. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." If it were a purely intellectual act, how could it be the subject of command or the matter of duty—For can that which is exclusively mental contain either moral good or evil? If faith be purely intellectual, must not unbelief, its opposite, be the same? But it is said, that as the disposition influences the judgment, and leads to either faith or unbelief, according to the state of the heart, the moral excellence of one, and the turpitude of the other, arises from its cause. But is not the Scripture most explicit in its condemnation of unbelief, as evil in itself; and in its commendation of faith, as morally excellent? The question is not what is the meaning of the term faith as employed by metaphysicians, but as employed by the apostles; and this meaning can be gathered only from their writings, in which many terms are employed with a signification somewhat different to that in which they are employed in ordinary discourse. Justification, for instance, in reference to ordinary affairs, means the act of declaring an accused person to be innocent of the charge brought against him; but, as the term is used by the sacred writers, means nothing more than treating a person acknowledged to be guilty, as righteous, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ.

Faith is not that which constitutes the ground of our acceptance with God, but which places us upon that ground: it is not our justifying righteousness, but that which unites us to Christ, and appropriates his righteousness to ourselves. It is true that a different view seems to be given by the apostle, when he says, quoting the Old Testament expression, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." It would seem from hence, and so it has been contended, that his faith was accepted in lieu of his obedience, as the matter of his righteousness, and the ground of his acceptance with God. But a more correct translation of the passage will rectify this mistake, and prevent what must be considered a fundamental error on the very important doctrine of justification by faith. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him, 'to,' 'in order to,' or 'towards,' his justification."\* It is not, then, *for* our faith, but by it, that we are justified: faith, as an act of ours, is no more the meritorious ground of our justification than any

\* Great efforts have been made by the opponents of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers for their justification, and especially by M'Knight, to overturn this doctrine, by the aid of the text we are now considering. This critic thought he had found in this passage a triumphant proof that our own faith, or act of believing, and not Christ's obedience unto death, constitutes our justifying righteousness, in lieu of our own good works. It is a little remarkable that so acute a critic should have overlooked the force of the Greek preposition (*εἰς*), not only as established by other scholars, but by himself: for in his preliminary Essay on the meaning of Greek Particles, which he has prefixed to his Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, although he gives fourteen different but harmonious renderings of this preposition, the meaning of "for," or "in lieu of," has no place. We have "concerning," "in order to," "towards," but not "for:" and yet he has given it this meaning in the text.



other of our performances; for, if it were, we should still be justified by works,—as faith is as much a work as penitence. The apostle is sufficiently explicit on this head, where he says, "But now the righteousness of God without law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned towards justification." "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Hope is the desire and expectation of those future good things which God has promised in his word. Faith believes the promise, hope desires its fulfilment. It is essential to hope, that its object be some good thing, either supposed or real; for no one can desire that which is evil, as evil: and its object must be something future; for who expects that of which he is already in possession? Desire, without expectation, is either mere wishing, or else despondency; expectation, without desire, is either indifference or dread: the union of both constitutes hope. The object of Christian hope is thus stated by the apostle:—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him" [in Christ] "purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Paul represents it as that which the whole rational creation has groaned after, ever since the entrance of sin into the world. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.\*"

\* Rom. viii. 13—25. This passage has been thought to contain inexplicable difficulties, and to have been in the mind of the apostle Peter when he spoke of the things hard to be understood in the writings of Paul. Upon this text some have raised the benevolent, but, as it strikes me, the groundless, hypothesis of the resurrection of the brute creation. If we are willing to be guided by the generally acknowledged canon of interpretation, of explaining a difficult passage by the context, we shall find a light which will conduct us through the intricacies of this text, and illuminate our course as we proceed. If we examine the context, we shall find, both from what precedes and what follows, that the apostle is speaking of the future happiness of the righteous.—The passage is introduced thus: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;" then follows the expression, "for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;" or, as it might be rendered, "looketh for the revelation of the sons of God;" *i. e.* the glory to be revealed, of which he had just spoken. Next comes a parenthetical description of

Christian hope is not a mere feeble and fluctuating expectation of eternal happiness, partaking more of the nature of uncertainty than of confidence; for it is, by a beautiful figure of speech, called a sure and steadfast anchor; and in other places, without a figure, it is called a lively hope, a good hope, and a confident one; and we are also admonished to go on to the full assurance of hope: expressions, especially the last, which amount to the highest degree of confident and triumphant expectation. Many Christians seem to err on this subject, by supposing that the grace of which we are now speaking, means nothing more than a state of mind, partaking of so much doubt, as leaves them very little above the level of absolute despondency.—Hope must ever be in proportion to our faith; if the latter be weak, the former will inevitably be so too.

It will be perceived, that although these three graces are, in some respects, very different, yet there are others in which they have points of strong resemblance. Faith has something of the expectation of hope, and hope something of the desire of love.—Hope touches faith at the point of expectation; love touches hope at the point of desire: and thus, like the colors of the rainbow, maintain their distinction, while, at the same time, they soften down into each other by almost insensible degrees.

But how are we to understand the apostle, when he says, "There remain these three?" He here alludes to the miraculous operations of the primitive church, and contrasts with their transient existence the permanent continuance in the Christian church of these cardinal virtues. Miracles were introduced to establish the credibility of the gospel testimony, and having delivered their evidence, retired for ever; but faith, and hope, and love, are to remain as the very essentials of true religion. Particular forms of church government are only the attire which piety wears, or the habitation in which it dwells; but these graces are the body, soul, and spirit, of vital religion. When these are no longer to be found on earth, godliness may be said to be retired and gone.

But are these the only Christian virtues which have outlived the age of miracles, and which are destined still to live and flourish on the earth? Certainly not. Penitence, temperance, yea, whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report: are as permanent and as strong in their obligations, as faith, and hope, and love; but these three either re-

the present earthly and temporal condition of the moral creation, and how it was brought into this condition. "For the creature was made subject to vanity;" *i. e.* to the misery of this present world, terminating in death; "not willingly," not on account of their own personal transgression, "but by him who hath subjected the same;" *i. e.* Adam, their natural root and federal head. The expression, "in hope," should be taken from the end of the twentieth verse, and placed at the commencement of the twenty-first; the conjunction (*οτι*) should be translated "that," instead of "because;" and the twenty-first verse, connected with the nineteenth, allowing for the intervening parenthesis, would thus read: "The earnest expectation of the creature looketh for the revelation of the sons of God; in hope that the creature shall be delivered from bondage of corruption;" *i. e.* death; to which the apostle afterwards opposes "the redemption of the body," or the resurrection into the glorious liberty of the children of God. "For we know that the whole creation," or every rational creature, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they;" *i. e.* the whole heathen world; "but

present, or imply, or excel, all others. They are the main trunk, from which all others issue as the branches, and by which they are supported.

"Now abideth faith, hope, charity; but the *greatest* of these is charity!" Love among the Christian virtues is, as poets have described Gabriel among archangels, a seraph loftier than all the seraph train. But we are not to suppose that it was the apostle's intention to depreciate the value and importance of the other two. What can be more important and necessary than the faith by which we are united to Christ, and justified in the sight of God; by which we purify our hearts and overcome the world? Turn to the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, where the sacred writer seems to conduct you into the temple of Christianity; and after exhibiting the names, and the statues, and the recorded deeds, of the heroes of the church, and displaying before you the spoils they have won in the battles of the Lord, says to you, "Behold the triumphs of faith!" Faith is the means of love: hence said the apostle, "Faith, which worketh by love." Nor could it be his intention to depreciate hope, which is called, "the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil;" of which it is said, "we are saved by hope;" and every man that hath this hope, "purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Much less are we warranted, from this expression, to select love, as the exclusive object of our pursuit, and to cultivate it to the neglect of the other two. Separate from them it can have no existence. Any attempt to build it up without them, is like the effort to raise a superstructure without a foundation. "Add to your faith, brotherly kindness and charity," says the apostle. It is only as we believe the testimony of God's love to us, which is contained in the gospel, that we can possess Christian charity to our fellow-men.

What the apostle means is, *that there are some views of love, in which it must be allowed to possess a higher degree of moral excellence than either faith or hope.*

1. It is the *END* which faith and hope are the means of producing. Love is what might be called an ultimate virtue; but faith and hope subordinate ones. Justification itself is but part of the divine means for bringing the soul of man into a state of moral perfection. The ultimate end to be obtained by redemption is the restoration of the image of God to

ourselves," the believers in the gospel of Christ, "who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, namely, the redemption of our body,"—the resurrection, and consequent full revelation, of our dignity and immortal glory as the sons of God.

Such is the meaning of this passage, in which the apostle, to give importance to the subject of future glory, represents it as the object of longing desire to the whole rational creation, the various tribes of which are exhibited as lifting up their heads from beneath the bondage of misery and death, and directing an exploring eye and eager hope towards IMMORTALITY; as that alone which could relieve their sorrows and satisfy their desires. They knew not with certainty that there was such a state; their notions were obscure and fluctuating; it was rather a wish than a belief: but it was that which they may be truly said to have groaned after, as what alone could compensate for the sorrows and the brevity of human life. It is no objection to this view of the passage, to say that the heathen could be scarcely said, in their state of ignorance, to hope to be delivered "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God;" for things are frequently set forth by the sacred writers, not as

the human spirit; and pardon is the introductory and subsidiary means. Hence faith, by which we are justified, is an exercise of mind, which produces, and is intended to produce, in us a conformity to the divine character. It is not a grace which terminates in itself, without being calculated or designed to originate and support any thing else, which is the case with love. Sanctity is the end of truth: so our Lord teaches us—"Sanctify them by the truth." The truth is received into the mind by faith, that it may impart sanctity, which includes love.—Similar remarks will apply to hope, of which it is said, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." Christian charity, then, attains this eminence by being the ultimate virtue, to which the other two refer. It is that moral condition of the soul, which it is the aim and purpose of all things to produce.

2. *Love is a social grace, while faith and hope are exercised in reference to ourselves.* We believe and hope, with an immediate regard to our own happiness; but in the exercise of love, we regard the happiness of mankind. Christian charity is a constant efflux of benevolent feeling, from the pure fountain of a heart devoted to the well-being of our species: faith and hope are the channels by which we receive the streams of peace and joy, from the fulness of God. By the latter, we are recipients of happiness; by the former, we are its distributors; by believing, we rejoice; by loving, we awaken the joys of others; by one, we become the heirs of salvation, who are ministered to by angels; by the other, we become ministering angels in our turn. What a philanthropist must that man be, who cultivates, and carries to even a tolerable perfection, the disposition so beautifully described in this chapter, and who displays all its properties in his intercourse with society: how must such an individual bless all with whom he has to do: as he pursues his holy career, sorrow is alleviated, care is mitigated, want supplied, wickedness reformed by his efforts; the groans of creation are hushed, and the tears of humanity wiped away, by his divine charity; and he becomes, in his measure, like that heavenly visitant in our world, of whom it is said, "He went about doing good."

Survey with admiration and delight the mighty operations, and the splendid achievements, of this powerful and benevolent principle, as they are to be seen within, and only within, the hallowed pale

they are actually contemplated by the persons in connection with whom they are introduced, but as they are in themselves. Thus, Christ is called the "desire of all nations;" not that all nations really desired him, but desired happiness, which his advent alone could introduce. So, in this case, every creature longs for that immortality, or future state of happiness which is in itself, though not contemplated as such by them, the glorious revelation of the sons of God. This most striking and beautiful passage has no reference to the brute creation, as groaning under the effects of man's sin, and from which they will be delivered by resurrection; no reference to any physical change to be produced during the millennium in the material world, now by a bold figure represented as burdened and pained by human guilt; for what has this to do with the context, or with the design of the apostle, which is to comfort believers under the sufferings of this mortal state? but it relates to that glory, honor and eternal life, which God has promised to them that love him in reference to which he so sublimely affirms, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The view here given is that which is taken also by Hammond and McKnight.



of Christianity. What are all the numerous and diversified institutions in our own land, where houseless poverty has found a home; craving hunger, a supply; forsaken infancy, a protector; helpless age, a refuge; ignorance, an instructor; penitence, a comforter; virtue, a defence;—but the triumphs and glories of love? What are all those sublime combinations of human energies, property, and influence, which have been formed for the illumination, reformation, and salvation of the human race? what Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, Anti-slavery Societies, Peace Societies,—but the mighty monuments of that love, “which seeketh not her own, and is kind?” What are the tears of commiseration, which flow for human sorrows, but the drops that fall from the eye of love? What the joy that is excited by the sight of happiness, but the smiles of love? What was it that made the great apostle of the Gentiles willing, not only to bear any accumulation of suffering, indignity, and reproach, but to pour out his blood as a libation for others, and even to be accursed from Christ for his kinsmen, and mankind in general?—Love! What is it that renders the modern missionary willing to go into perpetual exile, from the land of his fathers and of his birth, to spend the future years of his life, and find, at last, a grave amidst the sands of Africa, or the snows of Greenland: willing to exchange the society and polished intercourse of Europeans, for savages, whose minds are brutally ignorant, and whose manners are disgustingly offensive; willing to quit the land of Sabbaths, and of Bibles, and of churches, for regions over which the demon of superstition has extended his horrid sway, and beneath whose yoke nothing is to be seen but orgies, in which lust and cruelty struggle for pre-eminence?—Love! What was it that breathed into the heart of HOWARD that spirit which so filled and fired his imagination with visions of human misery, and which brought from so many dungeons the plaintive cry, “Come over and help us!” that he could no longer rest in his own house, or in his own country, but travelled, again and again, across the breadth of Europe, in quest of wretchedness; descending into the captive’s cell, that he might weigh his fetters, and measure his narrow apartment, and examine his food, to ascertain whether there was not more of misery in his hapless and forgotten lot, than justice demanded for the punishment of his crime; who inhaled the infected atmosphere of the lazaretto, to grapple with the plague—that fell destroyer of the human race, to approach which seemed to be courting death? It was love that formed the character of that illustrious man, and presented him to the notice and admiration of the civilized world. What was it that gave courage, confidence, and self-denial, to that EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN, who ventured among the furies of Newgate, where, if she had not cause to fear that assassins would attempt her life, she must have calculated upon finding a sort of demons, whose malignity, excited by the purity and virtue which seemed to set in stronger light, by the power of contrast, their own vices, would vent its rage on the angel form which had disturbed them? If ever the form and the beauty of charity were seen in one of our species, it was in MRS. FRY, when she entered the cells of our metropolitan prison, and called their vicious and loathsome inmates around her, to be instructed and reformed. And what is it that makes ten thousand holy men and women employ themselves continually in all kinds of self-denying exertions, to instruct the ignorant, to relieve the miserable, to reform the wicked? These, O heavenly charity! are thy works, the displays of thy excellences, and proofs of thy pre-eminence!

3. It is a distinguished excellence of love, *that it*

*is a likeness to God.* We are not at all surprised that the philosopher to whom the question was proposed, “What is God?” should have requested a day to prepare his answer: and when that was expired, should have asked a second, and a third, and should have at length confessed to the reproving monarch who proposed the query, that the more he examined the more he was confounded: and the farther he penetrated, the deeper and deeper he seemed plunging in darkness and mystery. Revelation has come to the aid of feeble reason, and, compared with the latter, has thrown a blaze of radiance on the all-important subject; and yet, with the light of truth shining around us, so little do we understand of God, that he may be said, as it respects us, to “make darkness his pavilion;” for “who by searching can find out God—who can find out the Almighty to perfection?” Of his essence we know nothing: of his eternity, omniscience, and omnipotence, next to nothing, as to any comprehension of them. His moral perfections are, it is true, more easily understood by us; but as these are all infinite, it is but little even of these that we can understand. “He is a rock, his way is perfect, without iniquity, just and right is he.” Inflexible justice, immaculate purity, inviolable truth, unimpeachable fidelity, belong to him; but if this were all the view the Scriptures gave us of his attributes, if the delineation of the divine character stopped here, how much would be wanting to the sinner’s comfort? Can the trembling and condemned criminal take much pleasure in contemplating the power, the justice, and the truth of the judge, who holds his destiny in his hand,—at least till he knows whether that judge have *mercy* also in his heart, and in his prerogative? And as little would it comfort us to know all the other attributes of Deity, if we would not exultingly exclaim, in the language of the apostle, “God is Love!” Sublime and heart-reviving declaration! never was anything uttered more calculated to delight the soul of man. Such a view of Deity is peculiar to revelation. Idolatry, in all her strange devices, in all her image-making processes, never conceived of such a God: power, wisdom, justice, truth, have all received their appropriate symbols of divinity, and have been worshipped under material forms, but benevolence had no statue, no temple, no priest. It was too pure a conception for the human heart, and too elevated an idea for human reason. “God is love!” This refers not, of course, to his essence, but to his character. It means, that benevolence is his whole moral character; not only that his nature is one sum of infinite excellence, but that his conduct is one mighty impulse to that which is good; in other words, that the divine disposition is an infinite propensity to delight in happiness, as already existing, or to produce it where it does not exist. But be it recollected, that the benevolence of God is the love of a governor or ruler, and not merely that of a philanthropist, or a father; and who, in the exercise of his good-will to any particular part, cannot sacrifice the welfare of the whole; and, consequently, whose benevolence is not only compatible with the exercise of retributive justice, but requires it.

Such is the disposition of that divine mind, to which, by Christian love, we are conformed: that benevolence of the Deity, which, in its propensity to delight in happiness, and to create it, makes him infinite in patience, to bear with the millions of crimes which daily insult and provoke him; infinite in mercy, to pardon the most aggravated transgressions; infinite in kindness, to provide for the wants and comforts of his creatures. The highest pre-eminence in Christian love, the richest gem in its crown of honor, is its resemblance to God. There is nothing remotely analogous to faith, or hope, in

the divine nature. He that is omniscient, cannot be said to believe; nor he that is infinitely blessed, and possessed of a divine fulness, be said to hope: but he can and does love. Resemblance to God is the highest glory of man. We should esteem it an honor to bear a faint impress of some of the more distinguished of the human race. It would be thought a high compliment, to have it said that our genius resembled that of Milton, and our benevolence that of Howard; that our faith was like Abraham's, or our meekness akin to that of Moses; but how much greater is the distinction to bear, by love, the image of God.

5. Love is eternal in its duration; it ascends with us to the skies, to live in our hearts, as the temper of our souls, for ever and ever. It is questioned by some, whether the other two graces will cease in the celestial state. It has been contended, that as the glories of the divine nature, are illimitable and innumerable, and the glorified mind will not attain to a perfect knowledge of these at once, but be continually receiving fresh communications on this vast theme, there must be both faith and hope in heaven; for as we successively receive these, we must believe in the assurance of those which are to come, and must perpetually look forward with expectation and desire. But does not this assume what cannot be proved—that our knowledge of God and divine things will be communicated in heaven by testimony, and not be acquired by intuition? It is not at all necessary that our growing knowledge, our eternally accumulating ideas, should be thus conveyed to us; for they may, for aught we know, be the reward of pleasant study, or they may flow into the mind, as the ideas of sensation do into the soul, without any effort, and may also come with all the certainty of that intuition by which we perceive the truth of axioms. To say that this is belief, is to confound two things essentially distinct—knowledge and faith. So that it does not appear plain, that faith, in any sense of the term, will exist in heaven. But though it could be proved that, in some modification of the term, it would be exercised in the celestial state, such a belief would differ so materially from that which we now possess, and by which we are justified and saved, that it may with propriety be said, faith will cease in heaven. All the great objects to which faith now refers are absent; we believe in their existence, through the report which is made of them in the word of God; but in heaven they will be immediately present to the senses of our glorified body, or the perceptive faculty of our spirit made perfect. Nor, as it respects hope, is it by any means certain that this will exist in the heavenly state: for although it is difficult to conceive how there can be otherwise than a futurity, even in eternity, and how there can be a state of mind otherwise than the desire and expectation of future good—yet, as in hope, there is usually some degree of doubt and uncertainty, the state of mind with which glorified spirits contemplate and anticipate future good, may be an indubitable certainty, which excludes the restlessness of desire, and the incertitude of expectation.

In the hour of death, the believer closes the conflict with his spiritual enemies, enters a world where no foe shall ever exist, and where, of course, he no longer needs either defensive or aggressive weapons. He takes off the helmet of salvation, for hope is not needed when he is brought to full possession: he lays aside the shield of faith, for seeing and knowing have succeeded to believing, and he will be beyond the fiery darts of the wicked one: the breast-plate of sincerity he retains, not as a weapon, but as an ornament—not as a means of defence, but as a memorial of victory; his feet are no longer shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,

for he will no more have to tread on the snares of the destroyer, nor be exposed to his missiles: the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, shall be sheathed, and hung with the trumpet in the hall; praying will cease, where there is no want to be supplied—no care to be alleviated—no sin to be forgiven—no sorrow to be soothed; watchfulness will no more be necessary, where no enemy is to be found, no danger arises; the means of grace will all be useless, where grace is swallowed up in glory; submission will never be called for, where there are no trials; and even many of the properties of love itself will seem to be absorbed in its general principle; many of its modifications and operations will cease, amidst its eternal delight in perfect excellence and happiness; for there can be no forgiveness of injuries where none will be inflicted; no long suffering where there is nothing to suffer; no concealment of faults where none can be committed; no self-denial where there will be nothing to try us; nothing of love will remain, nothing be exercised, but a pure and unmixed delight in happiness; and how should it stimulate us to the exercise of mutual forbearance and commiseration now, to consider that it is the only state where these virtues can be indulged!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### IMPROVEMENT.

Adopting the method pursued by the old Divines, shall take up this part of the subject in the way of

### INSTRUCTION.

1. May we not infer from it, the divine origin of those Scriptures, which give such a pre-eminence to the duty of love.

The contents of the word of God have ever been considered, and very justly, as a voucher for its divine authority. The Bible is its own witness: the sublimity of its doctrines, surpassing alike the invention and the comprehension of the human understanding; the harmony of its writers; the grandeur of its style, the more remarkable if we consider the illiterate character of many of those who wrote it; the elevation and purity of its morality, especially when contrasted with the condition of the whole world; the view it gives us of the nature and attributes of the Deity, of the character of Jesus Christ, of the state of human nature, of the scheme of redemption, of the elements of evangelical piety, of the certainty and glory of immortality;—are all the hand-writing of Jehovah, and together, form this illustrious inscription—"THE WORD OF GOD." Where is any thing like this among the works of men? Could ignorance have devised a system so sublime, or depravity invent a scheme so holy? But to go no farther than the subject we are now considering, and which may be regarded as not only a single precept of morality, but the spirit of the whole, is it conceivable that such a generous and self-denying system of duty would have sprung from the selfishness of human nature? Would man, had he been left to the mere exercise of his reason, and the impulses of his own heart, ever have summed up all morality and social obligation in that one word, LOVE, and have represented this as the essence of virtue? Is there any thing analogous to this in any human system with which we are acquainted?

Examine PAGANISM, both ancient and modern; and what of this spirit do you find in its multifarious varieties? Was benevolence, as has been already asked, ever embodied in an idol? was a temple, a statue, or an altar, ever raised to its honor? The abstractions of wisdom and power, and some few



of the sterner virtues of human nature, together with many of its sinful passions, obtained a niche in the Pantheon; but such a virtue as that enjoined by Paul, not only was not worshipped, but would have been despised, by all classes of ancient idolaters, as diametrically opposed to those qualities in which they considered human greatness to consist. To say nothing of that spirit of cruelty which, like a demon legion, possessed, and tortured, and convulsed, the worshippers of Moloch, even the milder and classic mythology of the Greeks and the Romans, breathed into its votaries no spirit of universal philanthropy. The patriotism of these nations, the chivalrous self-devotedness, which is blazoned with such splendor on the page of history, and which kindle such enthusiasm in the youthful imagination—what is it but the light of a consuming fire? The patriotism of Rome, and of Greece, in their best and purest days, was but a selfishness of the most destructive kind, which would have trampled down pure philanthropy with indignant scorn, as a mean and cowardly spirit—a traitor against the absorbing glory of Athens or of the Roman commonwealth. Those proud and haughty patriots thought that the world was made for them, and cared not what rights of other nations they invaded, so as they could strengthen their own power; nor what misery they inflicted, so as they could extend their own fame. Selfishness the most engrossing was the soul of their system; every man considered himself as represented by his country, and, in contending for the honor of the latter, was fighting for his own aggrandizement. Had love been the ascendant in those ages, the world would never have been made to lie prostrate at the feet of Alexander, or of Cæsar.

And who among the poets sang the praises of universal benevolence; who among the legislators made it the basis of their morals, who among the philosophers expatiated on its glories, or laid the obligation to cultivate it, upon the consciences of their disciples? The highest virtue of paganism was martial prowess. So heavenly a glory never shone upon it, as is contained in that one sentence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" or if any theory, distantly analogous to it, was found there, it was a borrowed light, the dim reflection of the distant brightness of divine truth.

And as to modern paganism, we need not say how vain it is to seek for universal love amidst the ferocities of the American Indians, the murderous cruelties of the South Sea Islanders, the disgusting selfishness and ridiculous vanity of the Chinese, or the insulting and degrading oppressions of the Hindoos.

Next turn your attention to MOHAMMEDANISM; and in what page of the Koran will you find, we will not say, such a description, and such an enforcement, of philanthropy as we have in this chapter; but where do you find a recognition of the principle? In all those pretended revelations from heaven, of which Gabriel is said to have been the bearer, where is there such a description of Deity as this—"God is love!" or such a sentiment as that which arises out of it, "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him!" So far from recognizing this principle, Islamism condemns and forbids it. It enjoins almsgiving, it is true, and gives it a high place amongst its virtues, but this is not the same as love, and may be often carried to a great extent without a particle of its nature. This system of imposture, abounding, as it does, with minute and ridiculous ceremonies, and a slavish regard to absurd ritual observances, enforces, by the authority of its founder, the most ferocious and blood-thirsty hatred of all who do not receive it in the exercise of implicit faith. Wars against all

infidels are not only enjoined in many passages of the Koran, but are declared to be in a high degree meritorious in the sight of God. How completely Islamism has filled its votaries with the most ferocious bigotry and the most merciless intolerance, is known by universal testimony. They every where pour insulting contempt upon all who are not Mussulmans, and feel a savage delight in adding cruelty to insult. "The infidel dogs," is a common appellation applied to Christians. The spirit of the system is every where visible in the absolute despotism of the governments of those countries in which it prevails; where it is found, the arts and the sciences do not flourish, and liberty withers in its shade. The flaming scimitar of the Sultan is its patron and defence; it was propagated by the sword—it is supported by the bow-string, and it is essentially and unalterably cruel. Such is Islamism; a curse to the world, a mystery in the divine government, a dreadful obstacle to the spread of Christianity, and the reverse of all that is holy and beneficent in the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

INFIDELITY, it is true, has attempted an imitation of this virtue, but infidels have had revelation to copy from; and even with this model before their eyes, have produced a caricature instead of a fac simile. The universal benevolence of this school is at war with the private affections and individual tenderness: that of Christianity springs out of them, and is founded upon them. We contend, therefore, that this noble, and generous, and useful disposition is one of the peculiarities of revealed truth; and whence, but from heaven, could it have proceeded, and who but Jehovah either could or would have given it the authority of a law? Whoever will reflect for a moment, will be struck with the singularity of the fact, that the Bible resolves the whole of practical religion into love to God, and the whole of morality into love to man. Is this, we ask again, the work of human invention: or does it look like the production of imposture? Would the selfishness of man have devised such a system; for where, among all his handy work, do we find any thing like it? O no!—It is part of the superscription of heaven—it is the impress of divinity—it is the seal of truth.

2. We learn, that the spirit of true religion is not only unlike, but opposed to, the characters most admired by the people of the world.

The character which the historian loves to delineate, on which he delights to exhaust the stores of his genius, and to lavish the richest coloring of his pencil; which he is most pleased to exhibit to the admiration of his readers; and in which, with an eager sympathy, those readers take as much delight as did the author, perusing it again and again, till the soul glows with enthusiasm;—is not the meek and virtuous prince, who is intent only on the arts of peace, and the internal welfare of his kingdom: no, but the ambitious hero, who fills the world with the fame of his victories, and by the aid of dauntless courage, consummate skill, and inordinate lust of dominion, goes on from conquering to conquer: this is the man for whom the admiration of posterity is claimed; whose crimes are lost sight of in the splendor of his genius, and whose cruelty is forgotten in the success with which it is followed. Thus it is, that under the power of a peculiar fascination, demons are worshipped in sight of the miseries they have inflicted, and within hearing of the groans they have extorted, merely on account of the vast genius they possess, and of their power to curse the children of men. But the New Testament lavishes no encomiums on such men, bestows no praise on their deeds, but treats them as the bitterest enemies of human happiness. The sword of conflict and the laurel of victory are not among

the objects which it commends to our attention, but which it devotes to our detestation: the peace-maker is the character on which it bestows all its praises, and invests with its richest honors.

If we descend from national affairs to the more confined range of social intercourse, we shall find the same perversion of judgment, the same misconception of true excellence, and the same misplaced admiration. What is the character which is usually most applauded in fashionable circles, and also by the generality of mankind, whether rich or poor? Is it not the high spirited individual who is quick to discern offence, and bold to resent it; who will allow no one with impunity to tread upon the skirt of his dignity, or his right; who is, perhaps, in some things, frank, generous, and affable, but under this exterior conceals a proud, independent spirit, which can brook neither a superior nor a rival, but is ever aspiring to distinction; who is courteous but ambitious; who would not willingly and intentionally give offence, but, having given it, would feel himself for ever disgraced by putting on the garment of humility, and asking forgiveness; who would give alms to the needy, but not precedence even to the deserving;—is not this the most admired of the world's favorites? Is not revenge dignified with the name of honor, and pride called spirit?—In short, are not the qualities generally admired by men, of the active, irascible, and ambitious kind; and are not the meek, and gentle, and passive virtues, looked upon with disesteem, and treated with contempt? Is poverty of spirit, is humility, is self-abasement, is the forgiveness of insults, is patience under provocation, admired, applauded, imitated? Is it to the character formed of these graces, that the silent homage of the heart, and the loud praises of the tongue, are paid? Quite the contrary. The men who would practise these things, must make up their minds, to endure the world's scorn, and to be treated as poor tame-spirited creatures, who deserve all the contumely they receive, because of their forbearance in submitting to it: and yet this is the spirit of religion, for this is the temper of Jesus. When Jesus Christ came into the world, he found it full of the notion that human glory consisted in ambition, pride, and resentment; the Jew and the Gentile participated in the sentiment, and hence he took particular pains to correct this notion, giving, in his sermon on the mount, a delineation of character the very opposite of this.—Indeed, the design of that sermon was to rectify the mistakes then universally prevalent on the subject of character and of happiness, and to teach the world that his disciples were to be pre-eminently distinguished by humility, penitence, meekness, purity, peaceableness, forgiveness, thirsting after righteousness; these are the qualities of a true Christian; and every one who bears that character must sedulously cultivate its appropriate dispositions, and be willing to bear the ridicule to which they will expose him. He must never seek to conciliate the favor of the unconverted, by imitating *their* spirit, or disguising his own; but bear their scorn, and wait with patience for a world where humility and meekness will be honored and rewarded, and *love*, their parent disposition, be crowned with glory.

3. This subject plainly shows us, that religion is exceedingly difficult.

It is a very common supposition, that it is an easy thing to be a Christian. And if to be a Christian were nothing more than going to a place of worship, indulging in pious emotions, subscribing to religious institutions, and professing certain religious opinions, the supposition would be correct; for nothing is more easy than all this: but if the spirit of religion be the disposition described in this chapter, then must it be obvious to every one who knows

his own heart, that it is the most difficult thing in the world. The Scriptures every where represent true piety by terms, allusions, and figures, which imply the greatest effort and the most persevering labor; hence we are commanded to “*strive* to enter in at the strait gate;” to “*lay aside every weight*, and the sin that doth most easily beset us; and to *run with patience* the race that is set before us;” to “*labor for the meat which endureth unto eternal life*;” to “*fight the good fight of faith*;” to “*mortify the deeds of the body*;” to “*crucify the flesh*.”—What terms! what ideas! what metaphors! Can any thing that is *easily* accomplished, require or justify the use of such language? If it were a light thing to be a Christian, could the sacred writers, with any propriety, have employed such strong and very expressive figures? Nothing, surely, can more impressively teach us the absolute and indispensable necessity of the most incessant as well as vigorous effort. The course of a sinner is down hill.—“*Easy*,” says Virgil, “is the descent to hell;” a transgressor has nothing to do but to give himself up to the indulgence of his corruptions, and he will slide, without effort, to perdition. Not so the saint. Heaven, by an appropriate figure of speech, is represented as on a high eminence, which cannot be reached without constant and laborious climbing.—Not that all this is necessary to *merit* heaven, but to reach it: we are justified by faith without works, and become entitled to eternal life exclusively by the righteousness of Christ; nor are we to conceive of the faith by which we receive this righteousness as consisting of any violent strivings of our minds, but as a simple dependance on the Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance with God: but we are speaking of the Christian temper of practical religion, of sanctification, of going on through all the trials and temptations of life, to the possession of that crown of glory which Christ has merited for us; and if this be easy work, there is nothing difficult.

4. Religion is a comparatively rare thing among men.

This is, indeed, a melancholy and a painful reflection; for it is saying, in other words, there are but few that are saved. It is applying to our own times the awful language employed by our Lord as descriptive of the state of things, in his days upon earth. “*Broad is the way which leadeth to destruction*, and many there be which go in thereat; strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”—Tremendous and truly dreadful is the idea, that the greatest part of mankind are moving towards the bottomless pit, and sinking daily in crowds to the miseries of perdition. Such a sentiment ought not to be admitted to the mind, except upon the clearest evidence; neither ought it to be uttered by the lip, much less be recorded by the pen, except with a view to lessen the havoc which it describes, by disturbing the delusion which is the cause of this extensive ruin.

It is evident—at least if the word of God be true—that no man can be saved without religion; and that the religion which does not include love, is in fact, no religion at all: the only inquiry, then, to be answered is, Does Christian love abound, or is it comparatively rare? Is the great mass of human beings around us actuated by a spirit of universal benevolence—a benevolence which is the fruit of regeneration, and the effect of faith; which springs from love to God, and is cherished by a sense of redeeming grace; which is exercised in obedience to the divine authority, and with a view to the divine glory; which, in its operations, is full of forbearance and meekness, kindness, candor, and sympathy, humility and disinterestedness? Is this the prevailing disposition of the bulk of mankind? Do we



see it manifested in the intercourse of society?—Alas! alas! instead of this, do we not still see these passions in operation, which the apostle mentions as descriptive of the conduct of mankind to each other in his day. "For we ourselves, who were sometime disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy; hateful, and hating one another." Are not anger, malice, revenge, selfishness, envy, pride, censoriousness, the predominant dispositions in the generality of mankind? Who can deny this, or who will attempt to deny it? And if this be the case, religion must be comparatively rare. Few, indeed, are living in the exemplification of Christian love. Dreadful, tremendous idea!—I tremble as I write!—my soul is distressed, and groans with anguish over my own statements. I would disbelieve them if I could; and even believing them, I would shut them up in my own bosom, if it were not necessary to promulgate them, in order to detect that delusion which, by leading men to think that it is an uncommon thing for souls to be lost, makes it a still rarer occurrence for them to be saved. I must come to the conclusion—for I cannot help it, without becoming an infidel—that there are, in our time, many more who perish, than are saved. "Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their pomp, and their multitude, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it." Reader, let the dreadful announcement, that it is a rare thing to be saved, startle you like thunder from your slumbers, and lead you to institute the most serious, and solemn, and impartial examination of your hearts. Do not rest satisfied with a mere vague idea of religion, or a mere general careless assumption that you are a Christian. Without such a disposition as that we have considered, you have no religion; and without religion you must perish eternally. You have been a *professor* of religion, and have approved a gospel ministry, and have enjoyed the light and advantages of gospel ordinances; but this will only aggravate your guilt and condemnation, and misery: if you are not living under the influence of love, you are living without religion, and must have your doom with those of whom it is said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

5. *We learn the great criminality of many things still remaining, and in some degree connived at, among professors of religion.*

*National antipathies* are too often found in considerable strength in the minds of Christians, especially in a time of warfare. Mistaking the nature of patriotism, and thinking, as did the ancient Greeks and Romans, that love for our country implies hatred of every rival nation, we are too apt to imbibe the spirit of the times and places in which we live, and to cherish a feeling of ill will towards our national competitors. The religion of the New Testament is by no means hostile to a spirit of pure and sublime patriotism; that patriotism which seeks to exalt a nation by all the arts of peace, the discoveries of science, the inventions of fancy, the diffusion of knowledge, morality, and religion: but the thirst of conquest, the love of aggrandizement, the lust of domination, which would make us dislike a nation, because it limits our powers and resists our aggressions, is an unchristian feeling, and an offence against the law of love. From every thing which would flatter the pride, or excite the ambition, or exasperate the anger, or increase the irritability, of a nation—every thing that would swell the current of prejudice against another country, we should carefully abstain: we should have no national enemies, no enmities and aversions excited, by the geographical divisions of the globe. We should remember that God hath made of one blood all na-

tions that dwell upon the earth; and, therefore, that all men are our brothers, and should be *loved* as brothers. A Christian is, in one sense, a citizen of the world; and although he was born in England, should abhor the thought of an hereditary dislike to an American, or a Frenchman. When national passions are roused and incensed, he is to bear no part in the widely circulating hatred; and amidst much that he may regret and condemn, is still to remember, that he is not to be "easily provoked."

Allied to this is the *passion for war*.

Whether the abstract principle of the unjustifiableness of war in every case be tenable, we will not now discuss; but that war, as it is usually maintained, is utterly indefensible on Christian principles, can admit of no question. It is but too evident, that nominal, and even great numbers of real Christians, are not duly impressed with the deep criminality and great enormity of the warlike spirit. Instead of bearing their testimony, by all proper means, and on every suitable occasion, against it, they partake of the general and murderous enthusiasm; they cherish the same antipathies; are actuated by the same revengeful, proud, ambitious spirit, as the people of the world; defend by argument the wars that arise, as just and necessary; read with as much avidity the details of battles; boast with as much exultation of the victories which are obtained; and enter as deeply into all the ardor of the hostile passion, as though they were the worshippers of Mars, the god of war, instead of Jehovah the God of love. Ought these things to be? Are they not a manifest and flagrant violation of all their principles and professions? The whole substance, genius, and tendency of Christianity, is pacific. The God whom we worship delighteth in mercy, and is infinitely benevolent; the character of Christ, who is our example, no less than our atonement, is formed of all the meek and gentle virtues, in the greatest perfection; the scheme of salvation is a plan of grace; all the doctrines of revelation unite in their tendency to soften and sweeten the temper; while the precepts of Christian morality forbid wrath, anger, malice, revenge of every kind or degree, and enjoin us, in no case, to render evil for evil, but ever to return good for evil. The New Testament is directly opposed to that rage and resentment, to which the world has given the delusive names of spirit and a sense of honor, and from whence wars and contentions proceed. To these haughty and mischievous sensibilities, which are but an imitation of the passions that rage in full force in the natures of brute animals, the religion of Jesus Christ offers all the resistance of a divine authority. Let any man think of the crimes committed and the miseries inflicted, by a single battle, and surely, if he has ever read only one of the Gospels, or one of the Epistles, he must be convinced that a hatred of war is an essential feature of practical religion. But we need go no further than this chapter to prove that the warlike passion, even in the least degree, is opposed to Christianity; for if love were universally prevalent, swords would be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks. It is high time for the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, in every part of the world, to study the genius of their religion, since, in the knowledge of this, many of them are still lamentably deficient. It is a shame upon what is called the Christian world, that it has not long since, borne universal, impassioned, and indignant testimony against that enormous evil, which still rages not merely among savages; but among scholars, philosophers, Christians, and divines. In vain, so far as regards the diffusion of a pacific spirit, has science enlightened the mind; in vain has learning softened the manners and cultivated the taste; in vain has art multi-

plied the comforts; in vain has even religion established the faith, and in some measure sanctified the minds of the inhabitants of Christendom; for war, horrid, bloody, destructive war, is as much practised, and as much patronised, as ever. Whatever men have learnt, they have not learnt to love one another; whatever attainments they have made in knowledge, they have made scarcely any in charity; however high they may have soared above the savage into the heights of science, they are still nearly upon a level in a taste for war. But *real* Christians should come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing: let them act upon their own principles, and become not only the friends but the advocates of peace: let them echo back in their several spheres the angel's description of Christianity, "peace on earth, good will to men:" let ministers from the pulpit, writers from the press, private Christians, in their intercourse with each other and with the world,—inculcate a fixed and irreconcilable abhorrence of war: let the church of God be a society for the diffusion of the principles of universal peace.

Love forbids the *indulgence of sectarian prejudice*. God has, for wise ends no doubt, permitted the existence of various and conflicting opinions among real Christians: but, unhappily, instead of making these differences merely the occasion of mutual forbearance, and opportunities for showing through what interposing media Christians can press to recognize and embrace each other; instead of converting them into tests of the sincerity, and proofs of the strength of our attachment;—we have permitted them to rise up into separating walls, which divide and alienate our hearts from each other. Perhaps, even towards those whose errors are too fundamental to allow us to acknowledge them as fellow-Christians, much less to hold communion with them in the bond of church fellowship, there is not enough of genuine charity; for is there not something of bitterness and contempt, of wrath and ill will, instead of that deep compassion and tender pity with which their situation should ever be viewed? Poor men! with all their boasted reason, they walk in darkness at noonday, and, with the lamp of truth in their hands, they are yet stumbling like the blind. We may feel a holy abhorrence of their sentiments, but, for ourselves, we should cherish the deepest commiseration.

But as to those who agree with us in all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and differ from us only on the forms of church government, on the mode and subject of a sacrament, or on some of the minor points of doctrine,—surely—surely, towards them we should maintain the full force of brotherly affection, without allowing our differences to interrupt for a moment the exercise of the most entire good will. We would indulge a hope, that, in this age, there is a nearer approximation than there was, of the various denominations of Christians to each other; that the spirit of intolerance is dying away; that there is a greater disposition to recognize each other, in the fullest sense of the term, as members of the same body, and brethren in the same family: but even yet, there is too much of the *odium theologicum* remaining among ministers, and too much of the spirit of party among laymen; too much of the feeling of rivalry and suspicion; too much disposition to misconstrue actions, to arraign motives: too much inclination to envy and jealousy. It is too common for the ministers and members of the establishment, to look with naughty contempt, and to speak as they feel towards those who secede from their church; and to revile them as troublesome schismatics, as rebels against established authority.

Let it not be thought, however, that it is only by

churchmen that the law of love is violated; for it must be confessed, and regretted, that it is not always observed as it should be, by the various sects of Dissenters, Baptists, Pædo-baptists, and Methodists, are all too often actuated by a degree of envy, jealousy, and selfishness, utterly unworthy of the great cause of religion, and altogether at variance with their common principles. What attempts are sometimes made by the Wesleysans to raise a prejudice against Calvinism and its adherents, by deformed, horrid, and ferocious looking caricatures of that system; and, on the other hand, how often are the whole body of Methodists condemned by Calvinists, as upholding all the errors of Pelagius! Baptists pour unmeasured contempt on infant baptism, and are repaid by their opponents in ridicule on adult immersion. Statements are often given of the sentiments of a sect, which they would deny, and consequences deduced from them which they would abhor. And then, what clashing of interests frequently takes place *when a new denomination is introduced into a town or a village*. Sometimes this introduction takes place without occasion for it: there is really no room for another body of Christians; the existing means of public instruction are already sufficient, both as to quantity and quality;—and, in this case, to be animated by such a zeal for *our* denomination, as to set it up at the certain hazard, and especially with the very hope, of dividing a prevailing and hitherto peaceful body of Christians, is, in the last degree, a hateful effusion of party spirit: men may call it zeal for the glory of God; but call it what they will, it is, when exhibited in its own deformity, nothing but envy, or the selfishness which seeketh its own. In other cases, what jealousy and ill will have been stirred up in the minds of an existing party, by an attempt made by another to establish itself in the same place! It signified nothing how large was the place, how great the population, how inadequate the means of religious instruction: all this was left out of view; and the new denomination, though they preached the gospel in its purity, was opposed and disliked, because it came into a field, where there was already an evangelical body, though that body could not be said to have occupied more than one little nook or corner of the uncultivated land. It would be invidious to name any denomination as having manifested most of this spirit,—no one, perhaps, is altogether free from it: but we have known, in some instances, such wretched, paltry, nay wicked, means resorted to; such attempts to oppose the new comers, by defaming their principles, by insinuating charges against their ministers, by throwing suspicions even over the purposes of their private meetings; such a system of espionage, by sending spies to gather something to cavil at from the discourses of their opponents, as they choose to call them; such a series of kidnapping tricks to draw away the young and unwary;—that we have felt it somewhat difficult, in witnessing this absence of Christian love in others, to retain it in exercise in our own hearts towards them. Instead of indulging such envy, jealousy, and ill will, all denominations who agree in the fundamental truths of the gospel should regard and hail each other, as only so many companies in the same regiment, or so many laborers in the same field, or so many workmen in the same building,—having one common object, and serving under one common head. But, alas! alas! no rival companies of a secular nature can be more jealous of each other than some congregations of professing Christians are. This remark does not apply so much to the larger bodies, which are to be found in our great towns and cities, as to the smaller ones, which exist in our less populous places. But we have all too much prejudice,



and too little Christian affection for each other.—We all need more of the mind of Christ. We do not wish to see a spirit of indifference to our distinctive opinions,—this would be a sin in the other extreme; but we desire to behold more cordial good will and confidence towards those who differ from us, and far, far less of the spirit of sects and parties.

Love would *soften the asperity, and remove the acrimony, of controversy.* We are not enemies to well-conducted controversy. As long as truth is attacked, it must be defended: and as long as error exists, it must be assailed. To give up the truth for the sake of peace, is a conspiracy against the Bible, and establishing a covenant with the enemies of the Lord. Not an iota of God's word must be surrendered to error and infidelity. We must "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" and resist, if need be, unto bonds, imprisonment, and death. A hollow, fawning, parasitical spirit, which would conciliate the friendship of men disaffected to the Scriptures, by giving up, or treating lightly, any of their contents, has the curse of heaven upon it. "Controversy is the safety valve of theological zeal. The spirit of party is opposed to it, being too intolerant for discussion. Truth has always triumphed by means of controversy: she has grown powerless only when the sleep of lethargy has stolen upon the church. What is Christianity itself, but a standing controversy with the infidel, the sensualist, and the formalist,—the men of the world? We admit that the *spirit of controversy*, or, to speak more properly, the *controversial spirit*, is not, in itself, very conducive to the cultivation of personal piety. The angry controvertist, and fierce polemic, is not always a devout believer or an amiable member of society. The church has been sometimes as much disgraced by her advocates, as annoyed by her assailants; and there are intestine debates and disputes, which, as friends to religion, as well as friends to peace, we could wish to have terminated for ever. But alive, as we trust we are, to the dangers of controversy, we must, nevertheless, protest against that timid, trimming, self-indulgent, ultra-liberal dread of religious debate, which would bind over truth to keep the peace with error, and consign those celestial weapons of the spiritual armory—reason and Scripture—to the ark of the church, as useless regalia."\* It is highly probable that all controversy will never cease, till truth stands revealed amidst the light of eternity. But there will come a period, when men will discuss their differences in the spirit of brotherly affection: when, perhaps, there will be fewer points unsettled, and those few will be debated with candor and mutual esteem. Too many, in their disputations about religion, contend for truth, till they have destroyed love, and even, in reference to the former, present it in so mutilated a form, as to deprive it of much of its own engaging beauty.

Luther's prayer should be presented by all—"From frivolous, fruitless controversies, good Lord deliver us!" It is well observed by an old writer, "That disputations in religion are sometimes necessary, but always dangerous; drawing the best spirits into the head from the heart, and either leaving it empty of all, or too full of fleshly zeal and passion, if extraordinary care be not taken still to supply and fill it anew with pious affection towards God, and love towards man." There is no case in which good men are more under the power of the deceitfulness of the heart, than when engaged in religious controversy; and when, under the idea that they are only "contending earnestly

for the faith," they indulge in all kinds of unharmed tempers, dip their pens in gall, deliberately write, as deliberately print, and no less deliberately justify, the bitterest sarcasms—the severest irony—the most railing accusations—the grossest personalities—the most uncharitable surmises: in short, when, as the controversy is about religion—a circumstance which ought to produce a spirit directly the reverse—there is no degree of abuse, reviling, and defamation, to which they do not have recourse. Such has been too often the tone of religious controversy, and by which it would seem as if the graces were mere heathen courtezans, in whose company a Christian should blush to be found; while the furies were so many personifications of holy zeal, whose assistance is to be solicited in the support of truth. Oh, what a handle has the spirit of angry controversy given to infidels against the whole system of revelation!—they have fought against Christianity with poisoned arrows, and the gall of furious polemic has supplied the venom in which they have dipped their sarcasms, ironies, and jests. It is high time that the apostle's exhortation should be practically remembered—"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:" that all who contend for the faith, should remember Paul's advice to Timothy—"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth." The wrath of man, in no instance, worketh the righteousness of God. Let any one read this chapter, and say if it be possible to justify the spirit in which contentions for the truth are generally carried on. Let it not be pleaded that we are commanded to rebuke sharply, as if this furnished an apology for all uncharitableness: for duties cannot be in opposition to each other: and therefore even this must be performed in a manner that is compatible with meekness and love. Unfortunately, the spirit of acrimonious controversy is as popular as it is sinful: those pugnacious hieropants, by whom it is carried on, are generally the leaders of a party, which thinks itself happy in a representative, who with his shield can defend them, and with his tremendous sword can vanquish their enemies, and thus lead them on to victory and supremacy. It would be amusing, if it were not too serious a matter for entertainment, to hear how these persons exult in the exploits of their redoubtable Hercules; and to see how securely they repose under the protection of his terrible and far-reaching club. What deep disgrace is it upon the professors and teachers of the religion of the meek and lowly Saviour, to suppose that *his* doctrines and *his* precepts require the aid of human and unhallowed passions to give them effect!

We may next exhibit the criminality which attaches to the sin of schism, and deplore its prevalence. It will be necessary to explain here what I mean by schism. No term has been more employed or more abused than this; it has furnished to bigots of all parties a theme of angry declamation, and a subject of bitter accusation and reproach, against all who differ from them in opinion; upon whatever ground, or in whatever spirit, that difference is maintained. Papists charge this sin upon Protestants; while the church of England, in its turn, attempts to fasten the guilt of it upon all who secede from her communion. It is circulated with eagerness from one denomination to another, as a term of ignominy, and is continually calling into exercise some of the worst passions of human nature. Papal bulls, episcopal charges, clerical sermons, party-spirited journals, are continually harping upon it; and multi-

\*Electric Review.

tudes, who have no other means of blackening an opponent, think that they cannot more effectually succeed in rendering him both odious and guilty, than by calling him a schismatic. I will at once confess, that schism is, indeed, when properly understood, a sin of so enormous a kind, that too much cannot be said for its condemnation. But it is *not* properly understood. In its etymological signification, it means a rent, a division, a separation of that which was originally one.\*

CAMPBELL's remarks are so clear and convincing on this subject, that they may, with great propriety, be referred to. As *breach*, or *rupture*, is the literal import of the term in our language, wherever these words may be figuratively applied, the term *schism* seems likewise capable of an application. It invariably supposes, that among those things whereof it is affirmed, there subsisted an union formerly, and as invariably denotes that the union subsists no longer. In this manner the apostle Paul uses the word, applying it to a particular church, or Christian congregation. Thus he adjures the Corinthians, by the name of the Lord Jesus, that there be no divisions, or *schisms*, among them! and in another place of the same Epistle, "I hear that there are divisions," or schisms. In order to obtain a proper idea of what is meant by a breach, or schism, in this application, we must form a just notion of that which constituted the union whereof the schism was a violation. Now, the great and powerful cement which united the souls of Christians, was their mutual love. Their hearts, in the emphatical language of holy writ, *were knit together in love*. This had been declared by their Master to be the distinguishing badge of their profession—"By this shall all men know that we are my disciples, if we have love one to another." Their partaking of the same baptism, their professing the same faith, their enjoying the same promises, and their joining in the same religious services—formed a connection merely external, and of little significance, unless, agreeably to the apostle's expression, it was rooted and grounded in love. As this, therefore, is the great criterion of the Christian character, and the foundation of Christian unity—whatever alienates the affections of Christians from one another is manifestly subversive of both, and may, consequently, with the greatest truth and energy, be denominated *schism*. It is not so much what makes an outward distinction, or separation (though this also may, in a lower degree, be so denominated,) as what produces an alienation of the heart, which constitutes *schism* in the sense of the apostle; for this strikes directly at the vitals of Christianity. Indeed, both the evil and the danger of the former—that is, an external separation—is principally to be estimated from its influence upon the latter—that is, in producing an alienation of heart; for it is in the union of affection among Christians, that the spirit, the life, and the power of religion are principally placed.

Wherever an alienation of heart takes place, and whatever be the occasion of it, whether there be an external separation or not, there is a schism. It may arise in the church of England, and has, perhaps, arisen in the divisions characterized by the terms evangelical and anti-evangelical; not, indeed, that these terms are recognized, but the distinctions certainly exist of which they are the designations; or it may exist in the church of Scotland, and does exist in a way similar to what occurs in the sister church in the south; it arose in the church of Rome, that boasted seat of unity and infallibility, in the contest between the Jansenists and the Jesuits; or, it may arise—as, alas! we know to our shame and distress it does too often arise—in our Independent

churches; so that, without any *actual* and *visible* separation or secession, this dreadful evil may be in full and mischievous operation. On the contrary, there may be diversity of opinion in the same society, as in those Baptist churches that admit of mixed communion, without any schism; and, provided there be no alienation of heart, no interruption to mutual esteem and good-will, there may be even an external separation, without schism. This sin can have no existence except in those cases where the unity of the spirit is disturbed, and the bond of peace is severed. As long as sincere love remains, there is, in the full sense of the term, no schism. Consequently, whatever tends to alienate the hearts of Christians from each other, whatever tends to produce discord, whatever tends to stir up strife—no matter who may be guilty of such conduct—is the very essence of this hateful vice. If men will attempt to coerce the conscience, by legislating for others in such matters as those of religion, and interfere, by human *authority*, in affairs which should be transacted through the medium of the Bible, between God and the soul—they must be answerable for those divisions which arise from the conscientious objections of persons who cannot submit to such enactments. If to separate peaceably from the church of England be the sin of schism, how will the church of England justify itself from the same charge brought against her by the church of Rome? The schismatic is not he who peaceably secedes; but he who renders secession necessary, by setting up requirements with which the separatist cannot comply without violating his conscience. Not that I mean to say Episcopalians, or even the supporters of any established religion whatever, are schismatical, except where their conduct is such as is calculated to produce mutual disaffection; so neither, on the other hand, are dissenters justly chargeable with this sin, unless their conduct can be fairly proved to be founded on a factious spirit of ill-will towards the religious establishment of the country. It is nothing to say that their dissent proceeds on insufficient grounds, and their objections to the church, as by law established, are to things that are indifferent in themselves, and therefore frivolous and vexatious. If they are indifferent, why then impose them? but of their indifference or importance dissenters themselves must judge; as did the reformed churches of Christendom of the corruptions of popery. If a dissenter employ himself in stirring up ill-will towards the members of the church of England, by arraigning the motives of its ministers, and charging them with sordid avarice, or a mere love of worldly pomp and domination; or by questioning the piety of its members; or by exciting animosity, or producing alienation of heart in the minds of his own party; or, if he so state, defend, and enforce his own principles, as that the natural result in those who hear him shall be an interruption of all communion of heart, and the exercise of all mutual good-will between the two denominations; if he employ himself in widening the breach between them, and repelling them farther from each other; he is indeed a schismatic, and deserves all the reproach which such conduct can bring upon him. But, then, it should be recollected that no *less* guilty of the sin of schism, is he who, whether he be a mitred or unmitred minister of the established church, employs his talents in holding up dissenters to public obloquy as a factious, troublesome, dangerous body, seceding upon no grounds but such as are frivolous, entitled to reproach for what they have done, and to suspicion for what they may do. But quitting names and parties, *schism* is the sin of doing any thing to alienate men's hearts from each other, whatever be the occasion or the means of the

\* Matthew ix. 16. John vii. 43.



estrangement, and estimate. It is the very opposite of charity; and in saying this we arraign it upon the most solemn and the most capital charge, which any indictment can prefer. We have all, perhaps, something of it in our spirit; but little does it occur to some men, when they are advancing their charges and fulminating their anathemas against others for the sin of schism, that, while in the eye of heaven the objects of their anger are innocent of the crime that is laid to their charge, they themselves are regarded by him, whose judgment is according to truth, as the greatest schismatics upon earth.

The temptation cannot be resisted, of introducing here a long,—but no one who has a taste for literary or moral beauty will deem it too long, an extract from the writings of Mr. Hall.

“The Gallican church, no doubt, looked upon it as a signal triumph, when she prevailed on Louis the Fourteenth to repeal the Edict of Nantes, and to suppress the Protestant religion. But what was the consequence? Where shall we look after this period, for her Fenelons and her Pascals; where, for the distinguished monuments of piety and learning, which were the glory of her better days? As for piety, she perceived she had no occasion for it, when there was no lustre of Christian holiness surrounding her; nor for learning, when she had no longer any opponents to confute, or any controversies to maintain. She felt herself at liberty to become as ignorant, as secular, as irreligious, as she pleased; and, amidst the silence and darkness she had created around her, she drew the curtains and retired to rest. The accession of numbers she gained by suppressing her opponents, was like the small extension of length a body acquires by death; the feeble remains of life were extinguished, and she lay a putrid corpse—a public nuisance, filling the air with pestilential exhalations. Such, there is every reason to believe, would be the effect of similar measures in England. That union among Christians which it is so desirable to recover, must, we are persuaded, be the result of something more heavenly and divine than legal restraints or angry controversies. Unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the spirit of division is a disease which will never be healed by troubling the waters. We must expect the cure from the increasing prevalence of religion, and from a copious communication of the Spirit to produce that event. A more extensive diffusion of piety, among all sects and parties, will be the best and only preparation for a cordial union. Christians will then be disposed to appreciate their differences more equitably, to turn their chief attention to points on which they agree; and, in consequence of loving each other more, to make every concession consistent with a good conscience. Instead of wishing to vanquish others, every one will be desirous of being vanquished by the truth. An awful fear of God, and an exclusive desire of discovering his mind, will hold a torch before them in their inquiries, which will strangely illuminate the path in which they are to tread. In the room of being repelled by mutual antipathy, they will be insensibly drawn nearer to each other by the ties of mutual attachment. A larger measure of the spirit of Christ would prevent them from converting every incidental variation into an impassable boundary, or from condemning the most innocent and laudable usages, for fear of symbolizing with another class of Christians,—an odious spirit, with which the writer under consideration is strongly impregnated. The general prevalence of piety in different communities, would inspire that mutual respect, that heartfelt homage, for the virtues conspicuous in the character of their respective members, which would urge us to ask, with astonishment and regret, Why cannot we be one? what is it that obstructs

our union? Instead of maintaining the barrier which separates us from each other, and employing ourselves in fortifying the frontiers of hostile communities, we should be anxiously devising the means of narrowing the grounds of dispute, by drawing the attention of all parties to those fundamental and catholic principles in which they concur.

“To this we may add, that a more perfect subjection to the authority of the great Head of the church, would restrain men from inventing new terms of communion, from lording it over conscience, or from exacting a scrupulous compliance with things which the word of God has left indifferent. That sense of imperfection we ought ever to cherish, would incline us to be looking up for superior light, and make us think it not improbable, that in the long night which has befallen us, we have all more or less mistaken our way, and have much to learn, and much to correct. The very idea of identifying a particular party with the church, would be exploded, the foolish clamor about schism hushed, and no one, however mean or inconsiderable, be expected to surrender his conscience to the claims of ecclesiastical dominion. The New Testament is surely not so obscure a book that were its contents to fall into the hands of a hundred serious, impartial men, it would produce such opposite conclusions, as must necessarily issue, in their forming two or more separate communions. It is remarkable, indeed, that the chief points about which real Christians are divided, are points on which that volume is silent; mere human fabrications which the presumption of men has attached to the Christian system. A larger communication of the spirit of truth would insensibly lead Christians into a similar train of thinking; and, being more under the guidance of that infallible teacher, they would gradually tend to the same point, and settle in the same conclusions. Without such an influence as this, the coalescing into one community would probably be productive of much mischief; it certainly would do no sort of good, since it would be the mere result of intolerance and pride, acting upon indolence and fear.

“During the present disjointed state of things, then, nothing remains but for every one to whom the care of any part of the church of Christ is entrusted, to exert himself to the utmost in the promotion of vital religion, in cementing the friendship of the good, and repressing, with a firm and steady hand, the heats and eruptions of party spirit. He will find sufficient employment for his time and his talents, in inculcating the great truths of the gospel, and endeavoring to “form Christ” in his hearers, without blowing the flames of contention, or widening that breach which is already the disgrace and calamity of the Christian name. Were our efforts uniformly to take this direction, there would be an *identity* in the impression made by religious instruction; the distortion of party features would gradually disappear, and Christians would every where approach toward that ideal beauty spoken of by painters, which is combined of the finest lines and traits conspicuous in individual forms. Since they have all drank into the same spirit, it is manifest nothing is wanting, but a larger portion of that spirit, to lay the foundation of a solid, cordial union. It is to the immoderate attachment to secular interest, the love of power, and the want of reverence for truth,—not to the obscurities of revelation,—we must impute the unhappy contentions among Christians; maladies which nothing can correct, but deep and genuine piety. The true *schismatic* is not so properly the person who declines a compliance with what he judges to be wrong, though he may be mistaken in that judgment, as the man who, like the author be-

fore us, sedulously employs every artifice to alienate the affections of good men from each other.\*

5. *How desirable is it that religion should prevail more than it does.*

If the spirit of religion is love, then who can avoid longing for its universal dominion? How much is it to be coveted for the PEACE OF OUR CHURCHES! It must be confessed, and that with grief and shame, that Zion is not yet a "peaceable habitation;" nor do all her assemblies present the good and the pleasant sight of brethren dwelling together in unity.—Contentions about one thing or another abound.—The seeds of discord are plentifully sown, and bear an exuberant crop of the fruits of contention. How many religious communities are distracted, to their own injury, the exultation of their enemies, and the discredit of religion! Many are the causes which produce this unhappy state of things; but that which gives force to them all, is the absence or the weakness of love. Here is the grand defect, and all other circumstances are but subsidiary. It is most melancholy and humiliating to discover, when some trifling disagreement occurs, what small attainments seemingly flourishing churches have made in this virtue; how insignificant is the subject over which two parties will engage in all the eagerness of contention, and how bitter the spirit with which the contention is carried on. It has been said, that quarrels about religion have been usually maintained with more malevolence than any other. This we deny; but, at the same time we must admit that they are often sustained with a measure of acrimony that is a disgrace to all concerned. The usual occasion of disagreement, is either the dismissal or the choice of a minister. And not unfrequently do believers wrangle about him who is to teach them religion, till they have lost the very spirit of piety itself. But whatever may be the occasion, want of love is the cause, of all feuds and strifes.

O! what churches we should have, if Christian charity were allowed to have its full scope! The pastor would labor with the most earnest, indefatigable, and disinterested zeal for the eternal welfare of the flock, and make it evident that compassion for souls, and not filthy lucre, was the impulse of all his conduct. Affection would beam in his eyes, and breathe in his spirit, while "the law of kindness" would dwell on his lips. He would preside over the people in the meekness of wisdom; and, instead of proudly lording it over God's heritage, he would rule them in love. He would be gentle among them, "even as a nurse cherishes her children." Instead of being easily provoked by any little unintentional infringement on his rights, or disrespect to his dignity, he would forbear with that which was the result of ignorance, and wisely and meekly expostulate in reference to that which was the effect of impertinence. Over all his talents, however brilliant, he would put the garment of humility; and with respect to all his success, however great, he would speak in the language of modesty. He would neither envy his more gifted or successful brethren, nor proudly vaunt over his inferiors. To all his charge, even the most illiterate and obscure, he would conduct himself with the condescension of true benevolence, put the most favorable construction on the actions of his people, repose in them an honorable confidence, labor to correct their errors, whether doctrinal or practical, and have no greater joy than to see them walking in the truth.

Christian charity would also dictate to the people, towards their minister, a line of conduct no less pious and amiable: it would lead them to attach them-

selves decidedly and warmly to his person and ministry; to demonstrate, in every possible way, their sincere and cordial wish to promote his comfort; to abstain from every thing that would grieve his mind; and, by every means in their power, to promote his usefulness. It would not allow them to be offended by his faithful rebukes, but cause them to submit, with Christian frankness and humility, to his cautions, admonitions and reproofs: it would lead them to interpret, in a candid manner, any little neglects, or unintentional offences: it would make willing and reasonable excuses for his seeming inattention: it would cover, and not expose, his infirmities, if they are such as comport with sterling piety: it would lead them to manifest a becoming respect for his office, and opinion:—and whilst it would leave them in full possession of entire freedom of thought, and manly dignity of conduct, would still prescribe humility and reverence, which the Scriptures claim for those who are set over them in the Lord.

In the conduct of the people towards each other, love would check all that irritability which is excited by a word,—that anger which is cherished till it ripens into malice or revenge. How much is the peace of our churches disturbed by such hot or sullen spirits! But did this heavenly virtue prevail, care would be taken not to give offence; and equal care would be in exercise not to take offence; one man would bridle his tongue, lest he should utter words that would grieve; another would rein in his temper, lest he should be provoked when he ought not; and all would be watchful against whatever would destroy the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. If any action has been done, or any word spoken of a doubtful kind, no one would suspect an evil motive, but rather be ready to conclude in favor of a good intention: suspicion would be displaced by mutual confidence, and hasty imputations of what is wrong, by the belief or hope of what is right. Instead of circulating ill reports of each other, or believing them when circulated, all would entertain too much good will, and too high an opinion of their brethren, to listen to an insinuation against them.—Universal kindness would reign throughout the society; each would feel an interest in the whole, and, by "whatsoever things are lovely," would promote their comfort and bear their burdens. There would be no struggle for pre-eminence, no grasping at power: such pride would be abhorred, and all would be subject one to another: the rich would not be puffed up, nor vaunt themselves against the poor, nor would the poor envy the rich. In a time of difficulty, such as the choice of a minister, there would be a giving up, as far as possible, of individual feeling, and all would consider the general good: no one would selfishly wish to have his taste alone consulted, his opinion alone attended to; no one would obtrude his views upon the rest in an unseemly manner: but each would consult all.

We may again remark, what churches we should have, if love were the ruling principle, which governed them. "Then would each of them present a peaceful haven, inviting men to retire from the tossings and perils of this unquiet ocean to a sacred enclosure, a sequestered spot, which the storms and tempests of the world were not permitted to invade:" then would the prayer of Christ be answered, and his people be one, and afford by their unit a demonstration of the divinity of his mission, which the most impious could not resist: then would the church on earth present a calm unruffled surface, which should reflect, as from a mirror, a bright resemblance of the church in heaven. Let us, then, for the honor of our principles, for the credit of our common Christianity, for our own peace and comfort in relation to the body of the people,—

\* Strictures on a work entitled, "Zeal without Innovation."



seek that more of this heavenly spirit may be diffused among all who are called by the name of Christ.

HOW DESIRABLE IT IS THAT SUCH A RELIGION AS THIS SHOULD BE SPREAD OVER THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH! In what a miserable condition is our globe. The whole world lieth in the wicked one, is entangled in the coils, and bitten by the fangs, and tortured by the venom, of the old serpent,—the devil. Justly has the apostle said, that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Nearly eighteen centuries have passed since he saw this bleeding victim of Satan’s cruelty, and heard its groans; and it is bleeding and groaning still. Wherever we go, either in reality or in imagination, we find ourselves in a vale of tears, where forms of misery, indefinitely varied and almost innumerable multiplied, rise before our eyes, and utter nothing but wo, wo, wo; and who can wonder that our world should thus be little else but a region of misery? Think upon the passions which predominate in human affairs; think of the vile affections, which like furies, tyrannize over the minds of men: wrath, malice, revenge, envy, pride, suspicions, selfishness, cruelty, slander,—these are the oligarchy of diabolical tempers, which usurp the dominion of the world in the name of Satan, and which, with something of his power and of his fury, torment the miserable children of men. How much of the most cruel slavery, the most sanguinary warfare, the most remorseless oppression, the most deadly revenge, the most operative mischief, the most crafty subtlety, the most insulting pride,—is perpetually at work in the destruction of human happiness. The prevalence of love would put a stop to all this: it would beat the sword of war into the ploughshare of peace: it would break the galling fetter of slavery, and bid the captive go free: it would change the tyrant into a father: it would convert the venom of malice into the milk of human kindness: it would transform the crafty serpent into the innocent dove: it would tame the ferocity of the implacable assassin into clemency; and would teach him to pronounce forgiveness, who now breathes out nothing but slaughter: it would teach pride to put on humility as a garment: it would give to the vigilant eye of intelligence the expression of candor, instead of the glance of suspicion; and would substitute, for the torment of envy, the exquisite delight of that sympathy which can rejoice with those that do rejoice.

WHAT AN ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS: AND WHAT A MOTIVE TO THEIR ZEALOUS SUPPORT!!

We have already proved that both Paganism and Mohammedanism are hostile to a spirit of universal benevolence: if, therefore, the world is ever to be subjugated to the mild and beneficial dominion of charity, the conquest must be made by Christianity. And to this honor is Christianity destined: it was to this theme that the evangelical prophet struck his lyre, when he said—“Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more: but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid.” “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down

together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Such is the poetic and beautiful description which is given by the prophet of the harmonizing and benevolent tendency of the gospel, as well as of its effect wherever its influence is entirely submitted to. How exceedingly is it to be desired, that such a system should be universally prevalent! The awful description which the apostle gives us of the idolatry of his times, and of its demoralizing effects,—deeply as it is colored, and darkly as it is shaded,—is not less justly applicable to the Pagan nations of the present day, than it was to those of antiquity. “They have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;—being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness: full of envy, debate, murder, deceit, malignity: whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” What a picture! Who can contemplate it without horror! Yet such is the state of society—such the aspect of the moral world—such are the crimes that deform, and pollute, and torment, the human race under the reign of Paganism, which, wherever it exists, converts earth into the vestibule of hell, a den of wild beasts, a range of malignant demons,—which educates men for fiends amidst the worst of excesses of depravity, and tortures its victims in this world preparatory to their execution in the next. Who that pretends to carry in his bosom the heart of a man,—much more who that professes to have the spirit of a Christian, which is the mind of Christ,—but must mourn in bitterness of soul over this frightful wilderness, and long to bring these habitations of cruelty under the reign of love?

Let it be recollected, that whenever the religion of Jesus Christ is felt in its proper influence; whenever it changes the heart, and sanctifies the life;—it does not merely turn men away from dumb idols, but causes them also to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world. It does not merely lead to a change of names, a substitution of one set of religious rites for another; but while it removes all that is impious in idolatry, it displaces all that is odious and abominable in vice. It presents the first table of the law, and says, “Thou shalt love God with all thy soul;” and then holds up the second, and commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Wherever the gospel of Christ is permitted to govern society, it banishes all that can afflict, and introduces whatever can comfort, the human race. All the crimes and the curses of society flee before it, while all the blessings of earth follow in its train: it not only brings learning, and arts, and sciences, with all that can adorn the mind and embellish life, but, as its chief benefit, it establishes the reign of charity. This it has done to a considerable extent in many places already; and even its enemies have acknowledged it. And he that would see what religion can do, has done, and will yet do, in exalting benevolence on the ruins of cruelty, and

in establishing the reign of mercy, let him contemplate, as he may do, through the medium of missionary reports, the once wild and savage Esquimaux, converted into peaceful, harmless, and benevolent followers of the meek and lowly Jesus; or the once murderous Otaheitan, who revelled in the blood of human sacrifices, and slaughtered without remorse their own children, now exhibiting a character remarkable for its clemency and gentleness; or the once marauding tribes of South Africa casting away their poisoned arrows, and their assassins, and exhibiting a moral transformation as great and striking, as if the lions, that prowled around their tents, were changed by miracles into lambs. And are these the triumphs of that religion, of which the many branches and the multiplied duties, are summed up in that one word—Love?

Friends of humanity! by all the love you bear to God or man, I conjure you to labor to the uttermost in extending the religion you profess. Estimate, if you can, the deep guilt of neglecting the cause of Christian missions. None of you have done what you could have done, or what you ought to do, in this most sacred, most important cause. I ask, what proportion of your property ought to be put in requisition for promoting the universal reign of charity? Is a tenth, or a fifth, or a third, enough for that cause, the object of which is to teach all men that dwell on the earth to love God supremely, and each other as themselves?—enough to be given for the purpose of cementing the whole human family together in a union of affection?—enough to give to a cause, which, when it is completely victorious,—and completely victorious it will be,—will banish pride, and malice, and envy, and revenge, from the abodes of man? How can you live in splendor—how can you enjoy your luxuries—how can you dwell with delight upon your accumulating hoards of wealth,—while all this is wanting to extend the influence of religion? Alas! alas! because you have so little of it in your own soul. Christian benevolence, were it felt in its full force, would lead to self-denial, to economy, to simple habits, to personal sacrifices,—in order that you may have more to spare, for the great object of Christian missions.

But in addition to your property, and your influence, give to the cause of missions your private, sincere, fervent, believing, and constant prayers.—It is only by the power of the Divine, Omnipotent Spirit, that the kingdom of Christ can be established in this selfish world. Read the chapter which we have considered,—compare with it the present state of mankind,—and then say if aught but the same power which called the chaos out of nothing, and raised this fair and beautiful world out of chaos, can effect a transformation so astonishing and sublime as would be effected, if this region of dark and vengeful passions were converted into an abode of holy and mild, and benevolent affections. Beseech Jehovah daily, that *he* would arise and plead his own cause: for surely love must be eminently the cause of him who is infinite in goodness, and delighteth in mercy. Give him no rest till, in answer to believing and earnest prayer, he shall say, "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.—And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the ser-

pent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### IMPROVEMENT, BY WAY OF EXAMINATION AND HUMILIATION.

SELF-EXAMINATION is the duty of every Christian, not merely that he may ascertain whether his faith be genuine, but whether it be sufficiently operative. It ought not to be a frequent and undecided question with any one,—“Am I in reality a child of God?” but it should be a constantly recurring inquiry, “Is there any one branch of religious obligation, which, through the deceitfulness of the human heart, I do not feel? or through a criminal heedlessness, I habitually neglect? The object of self-examination, with a believer, is to supply those defects in his graces, and to put away those remains of his corruptions, which, though they may not prove that he has not piety, prove that he has less than he ought to have. For this purpose, he should often bring his actions and his motives to the standard, and try his whole profession; as well what he does that he should not do, as what he does not that he should do. If we are to exhort one another daily, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, we surely ought to examine ourselves daily, for the same reason. Our guilty self-love is perpetually attempting to throw a veil over the sinful infirmities of our nature—to hide their criminality from our view; and thus to keep us in a state of false peace, by keeping us in ignorance. Against this deceitfulness of our heart, we can only be guarded by a frequent and close examination of our whole selves.

A frequent examination of our hearts and conduct is necessary, because of the multitude of our daily sins, which are often so minute as to escape the observation of a careless and superficial glance, and so numerous as to be forgotten from one day to another; and so, they either come not into notice, or pass out of recollection: and therefore they should be summed up every evening, and repented of, and forgiven, before we compose ourselves to sleep,—that nightly returning harbinger, and monitor, and image, of approaching death. The advantages of frequent examination are so many and so great as to recommend the practice strongly to all who are deeply anxious about the welfare of their souls; by this means we shall not only detect many sins which would otherwise be lost in our attention to greater ones, but we shall more easily destroy them, and more speedily revive our languishing graces; just as a wound may with greater facility be cured while it is yet fresh and bleeding, and an extinguished taper, while yet it retains a strong sympathy for light, may be rekindled, either by the near contact of a neighboring flame, or by the timely application of a little well directed breath. “Sins are apt to cluster and combine, when either we are in love with small sins, or when they proceed, from a careless and incurious spirit, into frequency and continuance; but we may easily keep them asunder by our daily prayers, and our nightly examinations, and our severe sentences: “for he that despiseth little things,” said the son of Sirach, “shall perish by little and little.” A frequent examination of our actions will tend to keep the conscience clear, so that the least fresh spot will be more easily seen; and so tender, that the least new pressure will be felt; for that which comes upon an already blotted page is scarcely discerned, and that which is added to an already great accumulation is hardly seen or felt.—This, also, is the best way to make our repentance pungent and particular. But on this subject we



shall have more to say presently. If self-examination be neglected for want of opportunity, it is plain that those, at least, who have their time at their own command and disposal are far too deeply involved in the business of the world and the labyrinths of care: no man ought to allow himself to be so taken up in looking into his secular pursuits, as to have no time to look into the state of his soul; and to be so greedy after gain, or so intent upon the objects of an earthly ambition, as to be careless about examining whether we are growing in grace, and increasing in the riches of faith and love, discovers a mind which either has no religion at all, or has reason to fear that it has none.

But besides that cursory retrospect which we should take every evening of the conduct of the day, a portion of time should be frequently set apart for the purpose of instituting a more minute and rigid inquiry into the state of our personal piety; when, taking in our hand, the word of God, we should descend with this candle of the Lord into the dark and deep recesses of the heart, enter every secret chamber, and pry into every corner to ascertain if any thing be hiding itself there which is contrary to the mind and will of God. Many standards will be found in the Scriptures, all concurring with each other in general purpose and principles, by which this investigation of our spirits should be conducted. We now propose the law of love.

On these occasions of introspection, we should inquire how far our faith is working by love. I will conceive of a professing Christian who has set apart a portion of time,—say on a Saturday evening, before he is to eat on the next day the Lord's supper; or on a Sabbath evening, when he has received the sacramental memorials of the Saviour's love, to examine into the state, not only of his conduct, but the frame and temper of his spirit. He is anxious to know how far he is living so as to please God.—We can imagine him, after having read the Scriptures, presenting his fervent supplications to God, in the language of the Psalmist, and saying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He now enters upon the business of self-examination; and the subject of inquiry that evening is the frame of his heart towards his fellow creatures, the state of his mind in reference to the law of love, the measure of his charity, and the infirmities of his temper. Hear his holy colloquies with himself. "I have no just reason, thanks be to sovereign grace! to question whether I have received the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. I believe my creed is sound; nor have I any serious ground for suspecting the sincerity of my faith, or the reality of my conversion: my conduct, too, so far as the estimate of man goes, has, through the help of God, been free from immorality. And though I may without presumption say that I love God, yet I am covered with confusion that my love is so weak and lukewarm. But my solemn business at this time is to examine into the state and measure of my Christian charity; for I am persuaded that whatever knowledge, or faith, or seeming raptures, or supposed communion with God, I may lay claim to,—I am but a very imperfect Christian, if I am considerably deficient in love.—Taking the apostolic description of this lovely virtue, I will bring my heart to the test.

"Do I then *love*, in his sense of the word? Is my heart a partaker of this disposition? Is the selfishness of my corrupt nature subdued, and made to give way to a spirit of universal benevolence: so that I can truly say I rejoice in happiness, and am conscious of a continual benevolent sympathy with universal being, and of a perpetual efflux of good will to all creatures? Do I feel as if my own hap-

piness were receiving constant accessions from the happiness of others; and that my soul, instead of living in her own little world within, an alien from the commonwealth of mankind, indifferent to all but herself, is in union and communion with my species? In short, do I know the meaning of the apostle's emphatic expression, 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him?' But let me descend to particulars.

"What do I know of the *forbearance* of love?—Can I suffer long, or am I easily provoked? Am I patient under provocation; restraining my anger; keeping my wrath in subjection under the most provoking insults, amidst the basest ingratitude, or the most irritating scorn? In my intercourse with my brethren in Christ, am I quick to take offence by any real or supposed slight or impertinence? Am I so jealous of my own dignity, so sensitive, and irritable, as to be roused to anger by any little offence, and transported to wrath by more serious provocations? Am I revengeful under injuries; brooding over them in silence, cherishing the remembrance, and reviving the recollection of them, waiting for an opportunity to retaliate, and rejoicing in the sufferings which come upon those that injure me? or am I easily conciliated, most forward to forgive, and ever ready to return good for evil? How have I acted since my last season of self-examination in these particulars? Let me call to recollection my conduct, that I may see how far I have practised the duty, and exhibited the excellence of Christian meekness.

"Charity is *kind*. Is kindness—universal, constant, operative kindness—characteristic of my conduct? Is the law of kindness on my lips, its smile upon my countenance, and its activity in my life? or am I uncivil and uncourteous in speech, frowning and repulsive in my aspect, grudging and unfrequent in acts of generosity? Have I the character, among my neighbors and acquaintance, of a man who can be always depended upon for a favor, when it is needed? or, on the contrary, am I by general report, a very unlikely person to lend a helping hand to a person in necessity? Are there any instances of unkindness which I can now call to remembrance, which have brought dishonor upon my reputation, guilt upon my conscience, reproach upon the cause of religion, and for which, therefore, I ought to seek the pardon of God through Christ!

"Charity *envieth not*. Am I subject to the tormenting influence of that truly diabolical temper by which a person is made miserable in himself, and to hate his neighbor or his rival, on account of that neighbor's or rival's distinctions? Am I so truly infernal in my dispositions, as to sicken and pine at the sight of the success or happiness of others, and to cherish ill-will on that account towards them?—When I hear another praised and commended, do I feel a burning of heart within, and an inclination to detract from their fame, and to lower them in the estimation of those who applaud them; and do I secretly rejoice when any thing occurs to lessen and lower them in public opinion, or to strip them of those distinctions which render them the objects of our dislike? or do I possess that true spirit of love, which constrains me to rejoice with those that rejoice, to feel pleased with their prosperity, and to consider their happiness as an accession to my own? Have I, indeed, that benevolence which delights so truly in felicity, as to make me glad at seeing it in the possession of an enemy or a rival?

"Charity *vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*. Is this descriptive of my spirit, in reference to my own attainments and achievements? Am I lowly in my own eyes, clothed with humility, modest in the estimate I form of myself, and all that belongs to me?

or am I proud, vain, and ostentatious; valuing and admiring myself on the ground of any personal, civil, ecclesiastical, or spiritual distinctions? Am I fond of exciting admiration, and obtaining applause? or am I content with the approbation of my own conscience, and the smile of God? Do I wish to make others feel their inferiority, and to suffer under a mortifying sense of it? or do I, from the most tender regard to their comfort, conceal, as much as possible, any superiority I may have over them; and make them easy and happy in my company? Do I indulge in haughty airs, or maintain a kind affability and an amiable condescension?

*"Charity doth not behave itself unseemly.* Is it my study not to give uneasiness and offence, by any thing unsuitable to my age, sex, rank, station, and circumstances; any thing rude, rough, impertinent, or unbecoming? or am I continually disturbing the comfort of those around me, by indecorous and unsuitable behavior?

*"Charity seeketh not her own.* Am I habitually selfish—anxious only for my own gratification, and building up my comfort to the annoyance or neglect of others? Am I indulging a penurious, avaricious disposition—feasting upon luxuries, and refusing to minister to the relief of human misery, according to the proportion in which God has blessed me? or am I diffusing abroad my substance, considering that I am only a steward of what I hold, and must account for it all? Am I overbearing and intolerant in discussion and debate—wanting others to sacrifice their views, in order that I may have every thing my own way? or am I willing to concede and yield, and disposed to give up my own will to the general opinion, and for the general good?

*"Charity thinketh no evil.* Am I suspicious, and apt to impute bad motives to men's conduct? or am I generous and confiding—prone to think the best that truth will allow? Am I censorious, or candid? Do I feel more in haste to condemn, than to excuse, and more eager to blame than to exculpate?

*"Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* What is my disposition toward those who are my opponents? Do I delight in, or mourn over, their faults? Do I so love them, as to be glad when, by their regard to truth and righteousness, they raise themselves in public esteem; and to be sorry when they injure their own cause, and give me an advantage over them by their errors and sins? Have I made that high attainment in virtue and piety, which leads me to delight in the righteousness of a rival, even when it may seem to exalt him? or am I still so destitute of love, as to say, in reference to his faults, 'Ah! so would I have it?'

*"Charity covereth all things.* Am I prone and anxious to conceal the failings of others, or to expose them? 'Believeth all things.' Am I credulous of whatever is to the advantage of a brother? 'Hopeth all things.' Where the evidence is not enough to warrant belief, do I indulge an expectation and desire that farther knowledge may explain the matter favorably?

*"Charity endureth all things.* Am I willing to make any exertion, to bear any hardship, to sustain any reasonable loss, for the peace and welfare of others? or am I so fond of ease, so indolent, so selfish, as to give nothing but mere ineffectual wishes for their comfort and well-being?

*"What measure of holy love have I—of that love which puts forth its energies in such operations as these? Do I so love God, and feel such a sense of his love to me, as to have my soul transformed into this divine temper? Does the love of Christ thus constrain me? Am I so absorbed in the contemplation of that stupendous display of divine benevolence, that unparalleled manifestation of infinite*

mercy, which was made in the cross of the Son of God, as to find the selfishness of my nature melted, and all its enemies subdued, by this most amazing and transporting scene? I feel, that without love, I cannot have entered into the meaning and design, the moral force and beauty, of the great atonement, that I can have no disposition which properly corresponds to that august and interesting spectacle.—I see that knowledge is not enough, that belief is not enough, that ecstasy is not enough, that hope is not enough; that, in fact, nothing can come up to the demands, to the spirit, to the design, of a religion which has the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ for its central object, and grand support, and distinguishing glory—but a temper of universal and practical benevolence. Have I this? If so, how much of it?"

Such should be the subject of diligent and frequent examination to every professing Christian.

HUMILIATION should follow examination.

The act of humbling and abasing ourselves before God, is a part of the duty, not only of sinners, when they make their first application to the mercy-seat for pardon, but of believers, through every successive stage of their Christian career. As long as we are the subjects of sin, we ought also to be the subjects of contrition. We may, through sovereign grace, have been justified by faith, and have been brought into a state of peace with God; but this does not render a very humbling sense and confession of our sins an exercise inappropriate to our state, any more than it is inconsistent with the relationship of a child to humble himself before his father, for those defects in his obedience, which, though they do not set aside his sonship, are unworthy of it. "If we say we have no sin," says the apostle, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This language applies to believers, and not merely to unconverted sinners; and so does that which follows—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The most perfect assurance of hope does not release us from the duty of abasing ourselves before God; and if an angel were sent to assure us that we are in a state of acceptance with heaven, we should still lie under obligation to cultivate a contrite and penitent frame of mind. Sin, and not merely punishment, is the ground of humiliation. It is the most detestable selfishness to imagine, that, because we are freed from the penal consequences of sin, we are under no obligation to lie low in the dust. With what unutterable disgust we should look upon the individual who, because his life had been spared by royal clemency, when it might have been taken by national justice, acted, after his pardon, as if that very pardon had entitled him to forget his crime, and to live as carelessly and as confidently as he would have done had he never sinned. A pardoned sinner—and no believer is anything more—should ever be a humble and self-abased creature in the sight of God.

The subject we are now upon shows us what cause there is for humiliation before God. This frame of mind should not be founded upon, or produced by, mere general views of our depraved nature, but by particular apprehensions in reference to sinful practice; as long as our confessions are confined to mere acknowledgments of a depraved nature, our convictions of sin are not likely to be very deep, nor our sorrow for it very pungent.—Such confessions will usually sink into mere formal and sorrowless acknowledgments of transgressions. It is by descending to details; it is the lively view and deep conviction of specific acts of transgressions, or defects in virtue; that awakens and sharpens the conscience, and brings the soul to feel that



godly sorrow which worketh repentance. One distinctly ascertained defect or transgression—especially if it be much dwelt upon in its extent, and influence, and aggravations—will do more to humble the soul, than hours spent in mere general confessions of a depraved nature.

There are many things, on the ground of which no self-abasement can be felt by the Christian who is walking in any degree of religious consistency. He cannot confess that which he has really not been guilty of: he cannot be humbled on account of any act of open immorality, for he has committed none. In reference to actual vice, he is to be thankful, not humble; he is to be humble, indeed, that he has a nature capable of it, if left of God; but he is to be thankful that he has not been permitted thus to disgrace himself. It is sometimes to be regretted that good people, in their public confessions of sin, are not more definite than they are, and that they do not express the particular sins for which they seek forgiveness of God. Without using language that seems applicable to adultery, and robbery, and drunkenness, our defects in all Christian graces are so numerous and so great, that there is no degree of humiliation which is too deep for those defects and omissions of which the holiest man is guilty before God. And we have no need to go beyond the subject of this treatise, to find how exceedingly sinful and vile we must all be in the sight of God. Let us only call to remembrance the truly sublime description which the apostle has given us of the divine nature, and to which, of necessity, we have so often referred—"God is love"—infinite, pure, and operative love; let us only recollect his wonderful patience, his diffusive kindness, his astonishing mercy even to his enemies; and then consider that it is our duty to be like him—to have a disposition, which, in pure, patient, and operative benevolence, ought to resemble his; that this was once our nature, and will be again, if we reach the celestial state: and surely in such a recollection, we shall find a convincing proof of our present exceeding sinfulness.

Let it not be replied, that this is subjecting us to too severe a test. By what test can we try our hearts, but the law of God? What a proof is it of sin, when we find that the instances in which we have committed it are so numerous, that we want to get rid of the law by which it is proved and detected? O! what a fallen nature is ours, and how low has it sunk! We are not now examining it in its worst state, as it is seen among Pagans and savages, or even the best of the heathen; nor as it is seen in the worst parts of Christendom; nor as it appears in the best of the unrenewed portions of mankind: no, but as it is exhibited in the church of Christ, in the enlightened and sanctified portions of the family of man.

Must we not, after this survey, exclaim with the Psalmist, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults!" Who can carry in his bosom a proud heart, or on his brow a lofty mein? Who can look with complacency upon his poor starveling graces, and doat with fond and pharisaic eyes upon his own righteousness? Who is not stripped at once, in his own view, of all his imperfect virtues; and presented to his own contemplation in the naked deformity of a poor, sinful, and imperfect creature, who has no ground for pride, but most ample and abundant cause for the deepest humiliation. Let the men who value themselves so highly on the ground of their moral dignity, and who are regarded by others as almost sinless characters, and who feel as if they had little or no occasion for the exercise of a penitential frame of mind; who pity as fanaticism, or scorn as hypocrisy, those lowly confessions which Christians make

at the footstool of the divine throne;—let *them* come to this ordeal and try themselves by this standard, that they may learn how ill grounded is their pride, and how little occasion they have to boast of their virtue! Would they like that any human eye should be able to trace all the movements of their hearts, and see all the workings of envy, and suspicion, and wrath, and selfishness, which the eye of *Deity* so often sees there? Say not that these are only the infirmities of our nature, to which the wisest and the best of the human race are ever subject in this world of imperfection; because this is confessing how deeply depraved is mankind, even in their best state. Can envy, and pride, and selfishness, and suspicion, and revenge, be looked upon as mere piccadilloes, which call for neither humiliation nor grief. Are they not the germs of all those crimes which have deluged the earth with blood, filled it with misery, and caused the whole creation to groan together until now? Murders, treasons, wars, massacres, with all the lighter crimes of robberies, extortions, and oppressions, have all sprung up from these passions.

What need, then, have we all of that great sacrifice which beareth away the sin of the world? and what need of a perpetually recurring application, by faith and repentance, to that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, and which cleanseth from all sin? What cause have we to repair nightly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy; and daily, that we may find grace to help in time of need. With the eye of faith upon the propitiatory offering that was presented to Divine justice by the Son of God upon the cross, let us continually approach the awful Majesty of heaven and earth, saying—"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

## CHAPTER XX.

### IMPROVEMENT, BY WAY OF EXHORTATION.

LOVE may be enforced upon us by a consideration of,

#### 1. *Our own peace and comfort.*

We are not to be indifferent to our own happiness; we cannot be: man can no more will his own misery, or be careless about his own comfort, than he can cease to exist. To seek for enjoyment is the first law of our existence—an inherent and inseparable propensity of our nature. In this respect, the angels, and the spirits of the just above, agree with man upon the earth. There is no sin, therefore, in desiring to be happy; we could not do otherwise, if we would. Ever since the entrance of sin, however, the heart is corrupted in its taste, so as to put evil for good; and, mistaking the nature of happiness, man of course mistakes the way to obtain it. All the pursuits of the world, however varying, and however unlawful, are the operations of this propensity of the human mind; they are all but so many efforts to obtain happiness. To this feeling of the human bosom many of the most comprehensive, beautiful, and encouraging invitations of the gospel of Christ are addressed; and it is at once the glory and the peculiarity of the gospel that addresses itself first, not to our moral, but to our natural, wants. It meets us, not as craving after holiness, for of this an unenlightened, unconverted sinner knows nothing; but as craving after happiness,—a desire common to every human bosom: this is the meaning of that exquisite language with which the apostle almost closes the word of God—"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is *athirst* come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The same view appertains to the lan-

guage of the Prophet—"Ho, every one that *thirsteth*, come ye to the waters." The thirst here mentioned is not, as has been frequently but erroneously stated, the strong desire of a convinced sinner after the blessings of the gospel: but that of a miserable creature after happiness. The persons addressed by the prophet are such as were spending their money for that which was not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not; expressions which will not apply to those who are desiring Christ, and the blessings of his gospel, but to those who are endeavoring to be happy without them: to all these the Lord Jesus is represented as saying, "Hearken diligently unto me. Come unto me: I will give you the sure mercies of David; then shall ye eat that which is good, and your soul shall delight itself in fatness. I am the way to happiness. Men shall be blessed in me." The blessing of the gospel, by which men are made happy, is not only justification through the righteousness of Christ, but also sanctification by his Spirit. An unrenewed heart can no more be happy in any place or circumstances, than a diseased body can be rendered easy and comfortable by situation and external advantages. Until the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, be regenerated, and brought to love God supremely, there can be no peace; as long as the heart is under the dominion of predominant selfishness, and all those lusts and passions to which it gives rise, it *must* be miserable. In the absence of love, the human bosom must be the seat of uneasiness and distress. Happiness does not arise from *possessions* so much as from *dispositions*: it is not what a man has, or where he dwells, but what he is. Whatever be the great *source* of felicity, the springs of it must be seated in our nature. There are certain tempers, the absence of which would render heaven a place of torment to us; and others, which would raise for us an Eden in the dreariest wilderness on earth.

*Love is essential to the happiness of a moral agent.* This was the original rectitude of our nature.—Man was made for love; to love God supremely, and to love whatever is like God, or related to him. This disposition was not only his temper in Paradise, but it was the very paradise of his soul, in which he held the sweetest communion with God and universal being. This tuned his heart to harmony with his Maker and his fellow creatures.—Every movement of his heart was a movement of love; and all his desires so many aspirations of love: this constituted at once his honor and his happiness. Hence, the implantation of this grace in his soul is the bringing back of man again to his original state, to his "divinely natural condition;" and, therefore, it is the restoration of him to true complacency and satisfaction. It is true that many, in the absence of this, pretend to some kind of enjoyment, and have it too; for there are pleasures of sin, such as they are: but as to solid happiness,—that which befits and satisfies a rational, moral, and immortal creature,—it may with the greatest truth be affirmed, that the wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but is continually casting up mire and dirt.

*Let any one consider the passions which love expels from the bosom, or which it keeps in subjection where it does not eradicate them, and ask if that heart can be the seat of comfort, or the region of peace, where they predominate.* As well may we expect quietude and comfort in a haunt of banditti, or in a den of wild beasts, or in a field of battle, as in a heart where anger, wrath, malice, envy, pride, and revenge, have taken up their abode. On the other hand, how calm, and composed, and cheerful, is that heart, where meekness is the presiding spirit; where love to God has introduced benevolence

to man,—a temper which follows it as closely as its shadow, and has subjugated the temper to the dominion of charity! Let any one consult his own experience, and inquire if there be not an ineffable delight in the feelings of benevolent regard; whether such a state do not resemble one of those calm and glowing summer evenings, when nature seems to be quietly reclining on the bosom of peace. But how demon-like is the feeling when the turbulent passions gain the ascendancy: what agitation and what torment are the result!

*Love is the very element which is congenial to the Holy Ghost, and renders the heart the abode of his delight.* "The irascible passions," says Mr. Hall, in his beautiful tract on the work of the Spirit, "surround the soul with a sort of troubled atmosphere, than which nothing is more contrary to the calm and holy light in which the spirit loves to dwell." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and *grace not the Spirit of God*;"—an expression as we have already considered, which, from its context, intimates that the Spirit of God is susceptible of offence; and peculiarly so, by any neglect or violation of the law of love. Every thing connected with our spiritual well being depends on the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts: when this divine guest retires from our souls, and withdraws his gracious influences, he gives utterance at the same time to the solemn denunciation, "Woe be unto you, if my soul depart from you."—The heart of the believer assumes *then* the character and appearance of a temple forsaken by its deity: all is ruin and desolation; the sacrifice ceases, the altar is overthrown, the fire is extinguished.—We have all much need to present with the utmost fervor the supplication of the Psalmist, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." No witness to our sonship, no consolations, no faith, no hope, no growth in grace, no joy and peace in believing,—can then be enjoyed; instead of this we shall be abandoned to worldly-mindedness, unbelief, despondency, gloomy apprehensions, and foreboding anticipations. Now the Spirit *will* retire from that heart which is destitute of love, and which is perpetually indulging in tempers of an opposite description. If, then, you would retain this divine visitant—this illustrious guest; if you would indeed continue to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; if you would have God abiding in you;—cultivate the grace of charity; invite him to your souls for this very purpose; yield yourselves to his tender solicitations, and gracious drawings; open your minds to his gentle illapses: and when at any time you feel an unusual relenting of mind, follow up the impression and resign your whole selves to the benign power of which you are at that time the happy subjects.

Love will promote your own peace and comfort, *by conciliating the good will and kindness of others.* In all the commerce of life, we are generally paid back in the same kind of conduct which we maintain towards others. Ill will, and pride, and envy, and selfishness, are sure to excite and to array against us the bad passions of mankind. Under such circumstances, many will take delight in annoying us; all our unkindness will come back upon us in innumerable acts of retaliation. But love conciliates esteem. "The meek shall inherit the earth;" their quiet, and inoffensive, and benevolent spirit subdues, by a mild but irresistible power, the most violent and injurious tempers. It has often led the lion, the tiger, and the serpent, by its soft and silken cord; it has charmed to tameness not only the fierceness of wild beasts, but the frantic rage of the furies. It was thus that Jacob subdued the rage of Esau, who was marching against him with pur-



poses of revenge; so that instead of executing his wrath, "he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him." It was thus that David softened the heart of Saul, and disarmed his malignity of its murderous intention. "Is this the voice of my son David?" said the royal persecutor; "and he lifted up his voice, and wept, saying to David, Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." "Who is he that will harm you," said the apostle, "if you are followers of that which is good?" Who can be the enemy of charity? Who will subject himself to the odium and reproach of being unkind to love?

In all these ways do we promote our own peace by the cultivation of this temper. And can we be indifferent to our own comfort? Is it a matter of no moment to us, whether our bosom be the seat of quietude or agitation? Oh no; it is not, it cannot be. But we have had our attention too much drawn off from ourselves. We have forgotten that it is said, the good man shall be satisfied from himself. We have thought, or acted too much as if we thought, the sources of peace were without us, and beyond us. We are not yet cured of the disease of earthly-mindedness. We still labor under the mistake, that happiness is something unconnected with moral disposition; that it is a matter foreign from ourselves, and arising from the adventitious circumstances of wealth, and rank, and fame. It is time to take another course, to try another scheme, and to adopt other means. Let us seek God's grace to open springs of pleasure in ourselves. Not that we are to seek in ourselves for joy and peace, when suffering under a consciousness of sin; not that, as sinners, we are to seek relief from the burden of guilt in our own virtues or graces; not that we are in any sense to look to our own works, as constituting our justifying righteousness: in all these views of our case, we must rejoice only *in the Lord*; but as those who are justified, and at peace with God through Christ, we are to do the work of righteousness, which is peace, and enjoy the effects of righteousness, which is quietness and assurance for ever: we are to covet the rejoicing which Paul speaks of as arising from "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." There is the joy of justification, and the joy of sanctification: one, the delight of being restored to God's favor by the work of Christ, and the other the joy of being restored to God's image by the work of the spirit. Many seem afraid of the joys of holiness, and count all delight but that of faith to be a mere effervescence of self-righteousness, and which only intoxicates the soul with pride. Why, then, has our Lord pronounced his seven-fold beatitude on the graces of a renewed mind? Why has he thus so emphatically and solemnly connected happiness with holiness? The angels are happy, because they are holy: and the heavenly felicity is the perfection of sanctity. In proportion, therefore, as we give ourselves up to the influence and the government of love, we approach to the blessedness of the spirits of just men made perfect. He that lives in love shall drink of the waters of his own cistern, and be satisfied; he shall, every morning, find this heavenly manna lying upon the surface of his soul, and be fed with it to eternal life; and finding himself united by faith to the truth, he shall find peace within, though in the world he should have tribulation.

True religion is no sullen stoicism, or gloomy melancholy; it is not an enthralling tyranny exercised over the noble and generous sentiments of love and delight, as those who are strangers to it

imagine: but it is full of a vigorous and masculine felicity, such as ennobles, instead of degrading, the soul; such as invigorates, instead of enervating, its powers; such as does not dispirit and sadden the mind afterwards, when the season of enjoyment is gone by, as do earthly and sensual pleasures; but elevates its views and purposes, and strengthens it for lofty enterprise and heroic deeds, by giving it to drink of the river of life, clear as crystal, which flows out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and refreshing it with what, in a true and a holy sense, may be called the nectar of immortality. That religion which does not consist in mere airy notions, in cold and heartless orthodoxy, in pharisaic forms and ceremonies, but in faith working by love—love to God, to Christ, to the brethren, and to the world—does sometimes, in its higher elevations, lead the soul into a mount of transfiguration, where it glows amidst the splendor that falls on it from the excellent glory: or takes it to the top of Pisgah, where it sees the distant prospect of the promised land; thus placing it in the porch of heaven, and on the confines of eternity.

2. *Love prepares the soul for making greater attainment in all other parts of religion.* It is produced by knowledge and faith; but, by a reaction, it increases the power of its own cause. It is just that state of heart, which is adapted to the growth of all the plants of religion, that without it are soon spoiled by the impure droppings of our own corrupt and selfish affections. How much will our growth *in knowledge* be aided by this state of soul? "If any man will do the will of God," said Christ, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Disposition prepares for knowledge. When Zoroaster's scholars asked him what they should do to get *winged souls*, such as might soar aloft in the bright beams of truth, he bade them bathe in the waters of life; and upon being required to state what they are, replied, "The four cardinal virtues, which are the four rivers of Paradise." The reason why truth prevails no more in the world, is because there is so little love. Our views are contracted and dim, not because of the narrowness of the prospect or the want of a sun to enlighten it, but because both the luminary and the scene are veiled by those mists which our corruptions send up from our hearts to becloud our understandings. The holier we are, the clearer will the truth appear to our intellect, and the better able shall we be to bear the brightness of his glory: even as our Lord declares, that it is purity of heart which must prepare us to sustain the beatific vision. The pagan sages also prescribe to their pupils a certain moral disposition, as essential to advancement in knowledge; and so does Christianity. Plato taught, that he who, by universal love and holy affection, was raised above the dominion of selfishness, came into the nearest union with God, and attained to the highest intellectual life: and this is the union of the Holy One, mentioned by the apostle whereby we know all things. Our souls are too clouded and too agitated by the bad feelings of our hearts, to make great attainments in holy light. The moral excellence of the truth is hidden from us; it passes before us in dark outline, an awful and majestic form; we see its back parts, but we discover not the brightness and the beauty of its countenance, as we might do, on account of our want of holy conformity to its nature, and of fitness for its fellowship. Let us, then, grow in love, that we may grow in knowledge.

And with respect to *faith*, the more we are brought to feel the influence of the great scheme of redeeming love, in transforming us into its own image, and causing us to love others, as God for Christ's sake has loved us, the more firm will be

our conviction of the divine origin of the plan which has thus wrought so marvellous a change upon us. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, in the revolution of feeling, of motive and of aim, which has been produced in his soul. To him the *experimental* evidence of the truth of the gospel appears with a brightness which none of the rest possess. He is himself an evidence of the divine power which accompanies the truth. No subtle argumentation can reason him out of the consciousness of that change and deliverance which he has experienced from predominant selfishness to love. If all Christians acted fully up to their principles, and drank as deeply as they might do, and should do, of the spirit of charity, the impress of heaven would be so clearly stamped upon the church, that the divinity of the gospel could no longer remain a matter of question with any. Who can doubt the heavenly origin of that system which has raised him not only to a heavenly hope, but to a heavenly temper?

3. The *credit and honor of religion* require that we should seek after higher attainments in love. It is well known by all who possess only the most superficial acquaintance with the word of God, that the end and design of the great scheme of revealed truth—a scheme which occupied the councils of heaven from eternity, and was accomplished by an incarnation of God himself; that the end for which the Son of God was crucified—a mystery which angels desire to look into—was not merely to bring a set of notions into the world, and to induce men to change one class of opinions and forms for another, still leaving the heart of man as impure and selfish as ever: on the contrary, it is known that God has come down to our nature, to raise us to his; that the whole plan of salvation terminates in the renewal and perfection of the human race in the principles of purity and benevolence. It has been declared, wherever Christianity has travelled, that the essence of religion is love. Hence expectations, which, though rising high, are well founded, have been indulged in reference to the benign and holy temper of the followers of the Lamb. Men have said, "Let us see how those *Christians* conduct themselves." What disgust and disappointment have been, in many cases, and to a wide extent, the result! Has the church of God yet answered to its own professions, or to the expectations of its spectators and enemies? Has religion derived all the advantage, in the way of attestation and recommendation, which it should, from the conduct of its friends? Are they seen every where so meek, so just, so kind, so candid, so benevolent, so humble—as to excite admiration, and to extort the concession that the principles which could produce such conduct must be from heaven? On the contrary, have not multitudes who judge of Christianity, not as they should do by itself, but by the conduct of its professors, received, from the offensive exhibitions of pride, and selfishness, and malice, which they are doomed to witness sometimes in the church, an unutterable disgust, an invincible prejudice against Christianity? Where is the spirit of charity which was exhibited in the great Author of Christianity, and which is enjoined in his precepts, and contained in his system?—is a question a thousand times asked, even by those who live in a Christian land, but who see little there of universal love. Creeds and catechisms, forms and ceremonies, devotional seasons and religious observances, will be thought of little worth, and will do little to ensure the esteem and to engage the imitation of mankind, in the absence of that disposition which all these things are adapted and intended to produce. The world's demand of the church is for love: "We have had," say they, "enough of opinions; let us now have

actions: we have had more than enough of articles of faith; let us now see more of the fruits of love." And how shall we meet that demand? Not by exhibiting less of truth, but more of love: not by giving up our creeds or our forms, but by carrying them out into all the beautiful effects of beneficence and purity.

Christians; the character of religion is entrusted to our keeping, and we are continually defaming it, or raising its reputation; and are either betraying it into the hands of its enemies, or conciliating their esteem towards it. It is high time for us to be more aware of our responsibility; high time for us to consider that we are perpetually employed in increasing or diminishing the ignominy of the cross. The good conduct of professors is a converting ordinance, and an edifying one too. "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify God your heavenly Father." "Shine as lights of the world, holding forth the word of life." How? Not by attachment to doctrine merely: no; the light of truth will do nothing without the light of love. A fiery zeal for truth, unaccompanied by love, is the meteor that misleads, or the lightning that kills, or the eruption that overwhelms and consumes;—all of which men are afraid of, and retire from: but a zeal for the truth, which is accompanied by benevolence, and produces it, is like the orb of day—men come to its light, and flock to the brightness of its rising.

O that my feeble voice could be heard, and my counsel followed, when I call the followers of Christ to a serious consideration of the necessity, for the sake of the credit of religion, of being like their great Saviour and leader! O that my words could have weight when I entreat them, as they regard the reputation of that gospel which is all their salvation and all their desire, to covet earnestly, and to pursue constantly, this "more excellent way!" O that I could prevail, when I beseech them—aye, *beseech* them—to study the genius of their religion in its facts, doctrines, duties, and examples, to see if it be not love! O that I could succeed in my wishes and my efforts, that they might no longer, by the indulgence of their passions, strengthen the bands of iniquity which bind men to their sins, and raise an enmity against religion which shall aid and accelerate the work of damnation! O that a new era would commence in the history of the church, when finding what a cloud had been brought upon the truth as it is in Jesus, by the bigotry, intolerance, and enormous cruelties of corrupt and persecuting communities; by the spirit of party which has, more or less, infected all sects; by the rancor of controversy; by the passion for war; by the pride of pharisaism; by the schisms of the brethren; by the envy, covetousness, and malice, of professors;—all true Christians would be baptized afresh unto repentance in the pure and peaceful waters of the sanctuary, confessing their sins of uncharitableness and ill will: then might it be expected that, as in the case of the Divine head, so in that of the mystical body, the Holy Ghost, in his dove-like form, would descend, to "rest upon it," and, by an earthly glory, prove and display its heavenly origin.

4. By this means, we shall be enabled, in a very eminent degree to glorify God. For a man to live for himself, as the ultimate end of his existence, is no less mean, and low, and little, than it is wicked. Selfishness of this kind not only pollutes the soul, but degrades it: it limits its desires within a very narrow compass; imprisons its hopes in a poor contemptible hovel; and drags down its ambition from the glory of the infinite and eternal God, to the paltry and insignificant interests of a finite and unworthy creature. The heart of the real Christian is



too large to be compressed within such boundaries: understanding that God is the author of his existence, he makes him the end of it; that as he came from him, he may be continually returning to him. Every thing, in point of dignity and elevation, is to be estimated by the end it seeks. Its aims give it whatever value it possesses, and fashion it into their own likeness. Nothing can make that great, which only aims at what is little; while a sublime nature is imparted to that which seeks a sublime end.—Now, a higher end, no creature in any world, however exalted, can propose to itself, than the glory of God; and a lower one, the humblest believer in all God's family on earth should never seek. This is, indeed to ennoble the soul; and enlarges it into a universal and comprehensive capacity of enjoying that one unbounded goodness, which is God himself; it makes it spread out and dilate itself in the infinite sphere of the Divine Being and blessedness, and makes it live in the fulness of him that filleth all in all. "We glorify God, by entertaining the impression of his glory upon us, and not by communicating any kind of glory to him. Then does a good man become the tabernacle of God, wherein the divine *Shechinah* does rest, and which the divine glory fills, when the frame of his mind and life is wholly according to that idea and pattern which he receives from the mount. We best glorify him, when we grow most like him; and then we act most for his glory, when a true spirit of sanctity, justice, and meekness, runs through all our actions; when we so live as becomes those that converse with the great mind and wisdom of the whole world; with that Almighty Spirit that made, supports, and governs all things; with that Being from whence all good flows, and in which there is no spot, stain, or shadow of evil; and so, being captivated and overcome by the sense of divine loveliness and goodness, endeavor to be like him, and to conform ourselves as much as may be to him. As God's seeking his own glory in respect of us is most properly the flowing forth of his goodness upon us; so our seeking the glory of God is most properly our endeavoring a participation of his goodness, and an earnest incessant pursuing after the divine perfection. When God becomes so great in our eyes, and all created things so little, that we reckon nothing as worthy of our aims and ambition, but a serious participation of the divine nature, and the exercise of divine virtues—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, and the like; when the soul, beholding the infinite beauty and loveliness of the Divinity, and then looking down and beholding all created perfection mantled over with darkness, is ravished into love and admiration of that never-setting brightness, and endeavors after the greatest resemblance of God, in justice, love, and goodness; when conversing with him by a secret feeling of the virtue, sweetness, and power of his goodness, we endeavor to assimilate ourselves to him; then we may be said to glorify him indeed.\* These fine sentiments should be engraven on our hearts, that they may be constantly reduced by us to practice. O, who that would have his nature exalted to the highest pitch of honor and happiness, ought not to cultivate that disposition which is the brightest representation contained in our world of its Divine Creator. To be the instrument of giving publicity to human excellence, of fixing the attention of others upon those qualities which, although eminently praiseworthy, were but little known, and exciting admiration on their behalf, is no mean or uninteresting employ-

ment; but to exhibit a temper, which is the likeness of God, to manifest a virtue, in reference to which it may be said that it is an image of Deity, what an unspeakable dignity and delight. This is, in the highest sense of the term, to be raised into fellowship with God,—a word that signifies not only an act of intercourse, but a state of communion; a communion of ends and aims, a kind of partnership in purpose and pursuit. God is ever seeking his own glory, as his ultimate aim in all his works: his perfection prevents him from seeking a lower end, and a higher he *cannot* seek: to manifest himself is his supreme purpose; and we can easily imagine that the manifestation of love is the end to which all the other displays to his attributes are made subservient. Have we any hallowed ambition in our nature, here is scope for its gratification, here is an object towards which we may let forth all its energies,—to hold communion with God in the manifestation of his glory: what can angels do more, except it be to do it more perfectly? Christians; see your high vocation: you are set apart not only by God, but for him; constituted a people, to show forth his praise; appointed, not only to receive his grace, but to reflect his beauty. Your highest glory is to manifest *his*. His image is the richest ornament of your moral nature; and to show it to the world, your great business upon earth. The meanest Christian shows forth more of God than the heavens which declare his glory, and the firmament which showeth his handy work: he is a brighter object in the universe, and teaches more of its infinite Author, than the sun in his mid-day splendor, or the moon in her beauty, attended by her starry train, that glitter upon the vault of night. But to rise to this eminence, we must excel in love; we must put forth all its excellences, and put them forth in all their vigor, and fulness, and harmony,—each in its time, and its place, and its occasion; for then shall we be like God: and to be like him, is in the highest sense to glorify him; and to glorify him, by being made partakers of a divine nature, is to receive, so far as a creature can receive it, a kind of inferior apotheosis, and to live up to the very height of our being, our honor, and our bliss.

5. Another motive, and it is the last we shall advance, for the cultivation of love is,—that it is the *state of mind which carries the soul on to its ultimate perfection in the celestial state, meets it for that state, and gives it a foretaste of its felicity.*

It has been observed by the learned CUDWORTH, who appears to have borrowed the idea from PLUTARCH, that Divine Wisdom hath so ordered the frame of the whole universe, that every thing should have its own appropriate receptacle, to which it shall be drawn by all the mighty force of an irresistible affinity: and as all heavenly bodies press towards the common centre of gravity, so is all sin, by a kind of strong sympathy and magnetic influence, drawn towards hell; while, on the other hand, all holiness is continually drawn upwards to heaven, to embosom itself in glory. Hell is nothing else but that orb in which all evil moves, and heaven is the opposite hemisphere of light, where holiness, which is perfect love, eternally revolves. Remove sin and disobedience out of hell, it will immediately lose its darkness, and shine out in all the serenity and beauty of heaven; remove love from heaven, and its sun will set amidst the darkness and the storms of everlasting night. Heaven is not merely a thing to come, it is in one sense a present possession; for "he that believeth in the Son *hath* everlasting life." It is rather a state than a place,—a state within us, rather than a thing without us; it is the likeness, and the enjoyment, and the service, of God; that which every true Christian carries in his bosom now, and to which he will fully enter hereafter

\* "Select Discourses, by John Smith;" a book which for its combination of learning, genius and piety, has scarcely its parallel in the English language

when he shall be made perfect in love. To this state all true religion is ever tending: the spirit of love is the motion and progress of the soul towards its eternal rest in the presence of God. No man can be prepared for the celestial felicity, while his heart is destitute of this; and whosoever has most of it, knows most of the unseen and ineffable joys of the righteous. He lives in the vestibule of the heavenly temple; and is ready, whenever its doors shall be opened, to enter into the dwelling place of God.—The image of God is upon him, and the *likeness* of Deity is always attended with something of the *happiness* of the Deity. O the bliss of that state, where the faculties of the mind, inconceivably expanded, shall let in the full streams of the divine beneficence, and open themselves to the uttermost to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height of that love which passeth knowledge; where divine goodness will so act directly upon the soul, as to raise it to a state of holy enjoyment surpassing all our present imaginations.

What a motive to go on in the pursuit of charity! Who does not wish to become better acquainted with his eternal state? Who does not wish to have a more correct knowledge of that condition in which he is to remain for ever? To attain to this, we cannot turn aside the veil which conceals the holy of holies from our view; we cannot look upon the throne of God: we cannot be rapt like Paul into the third heaven: no; but we may, like John, see the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, and feel it taking possession of our hearts in the spirit of love. Rarely, indeed, do Christians attain, in the present state, in this unquiet world, to that calm repose of mind, that serene enjoyment, attendant upon the subjugation of the passions of the gentle dominion of benevolence, which conveys to them any very high notion of the supreme felicity which must be connected with the consummation of such a temper. Happy seasons do occur; but alas! how seldom, when they are so far released from the influence of every selfish and angry affection—when

they so far feel the transforming influence of that divine beneficence which they contemplate—as to be conscious of the perfect felicity which must arise from their being filled with all the fulness of love.—Let us seek more and more after these anticipations of our eternal state: we have not already attained, neither are we already perfect; but, forgetting the things that are behind, let us reach onward, that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended in Christ Jesus. Heaven is not only above us, before us, beyond us, but may be within us: we may all know more of it than we do: let us become more and more anxious to accumulate, not the perishing riches of silver and gold, but the imperishable wealth of a holy and heavenly temper: let us aspire to immortality beyond the grave, and to the spirit of it upon earth,—ever remembering that a Christian is one who professes to be born from heaven and to be bound to it; one who has more of heaven than of earth in his disposition; one who already dwelleth in heaven by dwelling in God; one who is meetened for converse with the innumerable company of angels, with the spirits of just men made perfect, with God the judge of all, and with Jesus the mediator of the new covenant! one who bears the impress of eternity, and is irradiated with some beams of the celestial glory;—and how can he give meaning, or consistency, or truth, to professions so high and so holy, except it be by that love which is the fruit of regeneration, the effect of faith, the necessary operation of love to God: and which, being cherished in the soul by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, comprehends in its embraces the whole universe, and, in the exercise of its good-will towards those who come under its influence, “suffereth long and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; covereth all things; believeth all things;” endureth all things; and of which it is sublimely said, that “CHARITY NEVER FAILETH.”

THE END.



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THE  
FAMILY MONITOR:

OR, A

HELP TO DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES,  
AUTHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHER'S PRESENT, &c.

"Behold! how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.  
PSALM CXXXVI.



## PREFACE.

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THE substance of the following chapters, was delivered by the author in a course of sermons which followed a series of expository lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians. The consecutive method of preaching, which he principally uses, is attended, he thinks, with this, among many other advantages, that it brings under the review of a minister, many subjects which would otherwise be overlooked: affords an opportunity for the introduction of some topics, which, from their peculiarity, seem to require such a way of access to the pulpit; and also furnishes an apology for the discussion of others, which the fastidiousness of modern delicacy has almost excluded from the range of pastoral admonition. On entering upon the first branch of relative duties, the author was so much under the influence, perhaps improperly, of this excess of refinement, and felt so much the difficulty of making a public statement of the duties of husbands and wives, that he had determined, at one time, to relieve himself from the embarrassment, by merely reading large extracts from Mr. Jay's beautiful sermon on this subject. After he had preached two discourses, and thus discharged, as well as he was able, this rather perplexing task, he received a numerous signed petition from many husbands and their wives, belonging to his congregation, requesting that they might be permitted to *read* in print, the statement of their mutual obligations, which they had heard delivered with so much fidelity and impartiality from the pulpit. Instead of being limited by this request, the author has gone beyond it, and sent forth the whole series of relative duties, thus furnishing a manual of advice, in which all the members of the household may find something appropriate to the peculiarity of their circumstances.

It is an unquestionable truth, that if a man be not happy at home, he cannot be happy any where; and the converse of the proposition is no less true, that he who is happy there, need be miserable nowhere. "It is the place of all the world I love most," said the interesting author of the *Task*, when speaking of home. And he may be felicitated who can say the same. Any attempt, however feeble, to render the domestic circle what it ever should be, a scene of comfort, is at least benevolent. Nor is this a hopeless effort; for he who has the Bible in his hand, and speaks as the oracles of God, can disclose

at once, and in a few words, the important secret. The principles of greatest consequence to mankind, whether we refer to science or to morals, lie not buried deep in gloom and mystery, but are to be found, like the manna of the Israelites, upon the surface of things. The secret of happiness lies folded up in the leaves of the Bible, and is carried in the bosom of religion. The author knows of no other way to felicity, and therefore does not profess to teach any other. Let the two parties in wedded life, be believers in Christ Jesus, and partake themselves of the peace that passeth understanding; let them, when they become a father and a mother, bring up their children in the fear of God; and as a master and a mistress, be diligent and successful in instructing their servants in the principles of religion, and if happiness is to be found upon earth, it will be enjoyed within the hallowed circle of a family, thus united by love, and sanctified by grace.

The author does not deny, that much of worldly comfort may be, and often is, enjoyed in some families, which neither possess nor profess a serious regard to the claims of religion; while it must be acknowledged on the other hand, that there are to be found professors of religion, whose households are any thing but happy ones. In reference to the former, it may be affirmed, that piety, while it would raise their enjoyment to a sublimer kind, and a higher degree of happiness in this world, would also perpetuate it through eternity; and in reference to the latter, it may be remarked, that their disquietude is not produced by religion, but occasioned by the want of it. A mere profession of the Christian faith is rather a hinderance to felicity than a help: nothing short of real religion can be expected to yield its joys.

In the following pages there will be found numerous and long extracts from an incomparably excellent work, by the Rev. Christopher Anderson, of Edinburgh, entitled "*The Domestic Constitution.*" Of that volume, the author feels that his own is not worthy, in any instance, to be the harbinger; but should he find that he has introduced any families to an acquaintance with a treatise, so well worthy of their most serious attention, he will be thankful for that measure of benefit, and rejoice that he has not labored in vain.

*Edgbaston, September 13, 1828.*

# THE FAMILY MONITOR.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE DOMESTIC CONSTITUTION, AND THE MUTUAL DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

"By Thee

Founded in reason, loyal, just and pure,  
Relations dear, and all the charities  
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.  
Far be it that I should write thee, sin or blame,  
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,  
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets!"—MILTON.

A FAMILY! How delightful the associations we form with such a word! How pleasing the images with which it crowds the mind, and how tender the emotions which it awakens in the heart! Who can wonder that domestic happiness should be a theme dear to poetry, and that it should have called forth some of the sweetest strains of fancy and of feeling? Or who can be surprised, that of all the sweets which present themselves in the vista of futurity, to the eye of those who are setting out on the journey of life, this should excite the most ardent desires, and engage the most active pursuits? But alas! of those who in the ardor of youth, start for the possession of this dear prize, how many fail! And why? *Because their imagination alone is engaged in the subject*: they have no definite ideas of what it means, nor of the way in which it is to be obtained. It is a mere lovely creation of a romantic mind, and oftentimes, with such persons, fades away,

"And like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leaves not a wreck behind."

It may be of service, therefore, to lay open the sources of domestic happiness, and to show that these are to be found, not in the flowery regions of imagination, but amidst the sober realities of piety, chaste love, prudence, and well-formed connections. These precious springs are within the reach of all who will take the right path that leads to them; and this is the way of knowledge. We must make ourselves acquainted with the nature, designs, and importance of the family compact; we must analyze this union to ascertain its elements, its laws, and its purposes. Who can be a good member of any state, without knowing the nature of its constitution, and the laws by which it is directed? And it is equally vain to look for domestic happiness, without a clear insight into the ends and laws which Providence has laid down in the formation of the household.

In the discussions which have been agitated, to settle the question, as to the form of civil government best adapted to secure the welfare of the human race, the FAMILY CONSTITUTION has been too much overlooked. Speculation has been indulged, and theories proposed by their respective authors, in reference to the greater aggregations of society, with all the confidence of oracular authority; while at the same time, it is evident they have forgotten, how much the well-being of states is dependant on the well-being of the families of which all states are composed. If there be any truth in the figure, by which a nation is compared to a pillar, we should recollect, that while individuals are the materials

of which it is formed, it is the good condition of families that constitutes the cement which holds it together, and gives to its fine form, solidity and durability. Let this be wanting, and however inherently excellent the materials, however elegant the shape, however ornamented the base, the shaft, or the capital may be, it contains in itself a principle of decay, an active cause of dilapidation and ruin.

The domestic constitution is a divine institute.—God formed it himself. He taketh the solitary, and setteth him in families; and like all the rest of his works, it is well and wisely done. It is, as a system of government, quite unique; neither below the heavens, nor above them, is there any thing precisely like it. In some respects it resembles the civil government of a state; in others, the ecclesiastical rule of a church; and it is there that the church and the state may be said to meet. "This meeting, however, is only on a very small scale, and under very peculiar circumstances." When directed as it should be, every family has a sacred character, inasmuch as the head of it acts the part of both the prophet and priest of the household, by instructing them in the knowledge, and leading them in the worship of God; while at the same time, he discharges the duties of a king, by supporting a system of order, subordination, and discipline. Conformably with its nature, is its design; beyond the benefit of the individuals which compose it, and which is its first and immediate object, it is intended to promote the welfare of the national community to which it belongs, and of which it is a part: hence every nation has stamped a great value on the family compact, and guarded it with the most powerful sanctions. Well instructed, well ordered, and well governed families, are the springs, which, from their retirements, send forth the tributary streams that make up by their confluence, the majestic flow of national greatness and prosperity; nor can any state be prosperous, where family order and subordination are generally neglected; nor otherwise *than* prosperous, whatever be its political form, where these are generally maintained. It is certainly under the wise instruction, and the impartial sceptre of a father, and within the little family circle, that the son becomes a good citizen; it is by the fire-side and upon the family hearth, that loyalty and patriotism and every public virtue grows; as it is in disordered families, that factious demagogues, and turbulent rebels, and tyrannical oppressors, are trained up to be their neighbor's torment, or their country's scourge. It is there that the thorn and the briar, to use the elegant simile of the prophet, or the myrtle and the fir tree are reared, which are in future time, to be the ornament and defence, or the deformity and misery of the land.

But has the domestic constitution a reference only to the present world, and its perishable interests?—By no means. All God's arrangements for man, view him, and are chiefly intended for him, in his relation to eternity. The eye of Deity is upon that immortality to which he has destined the human race. "Every family has, in fact, a sacred character belonging to it, which may, indeed, be forgotten or disdained; but the family is constituted, and



ought, therefore, to be conducted with the prospect of the rising generation following that which precedes it, not only to the grave, but to eternity.\*—Every member of every household is an immortal creature: every one that leaves the circle by death, goes into an eternity of torment or of bliss. Now, since all the institutes of God look to another world as their chief and ultimate reference, surely, surely, that institute which is the most powerful of all, in the formation of character, must be considered as set up with a special intention to prepare the subjects of it for "glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life."

No one judges aright of this household compact, nor can any be in a capacity rightly to perform its duties, who does not consider this double relation which it bears to the state and to the church, and who does not view it as a preparatory system, for training up the good citizen and the real Christian. And for these objects, how great is the power which it really possesses: how considerable is the mutual influence of husbands and wives, in moulding each other's tastes, or modifying each other's dispositions; of parents, in forming the character of their children and servants; and of brothers and sisters, in stimulating and guiding each other's pursuits. The power of other constitutions is remote, occasional, and feeble; but this is close, constant, and mighty. With other systems, the character is only casually brought into contact; but this always touches us. We live, and move, and have our being, in the very centre of it. So powerful is the influence of this association on its members, that it has preserved them, by the blessing of God, in the possession of piety and morality, in times and places of the greatest corruption of manners. "On what vantage ground does the conscientious Christian parent here stand! The springs of public and social life may be greatly corrupted; the nation in which he dwells may degenerate into licentiousness, into idolatry, or into the most daring infidelity. Retiring then to this sacred enclosure, he may entrench himself, and there, lifting up a standard for God, either wait the approach of better days, or leave a few behind him, on whom the best blessings of those days, will certainly descend. Though the heavens be shut up and there be no dew, the little enclosures which he cultivates, like the fleece of Gideon, will discover evident marks of the Divine favor. It actually seems as though in the wide scene, where the vices of the age may, and can reign triumphant, this were some secure and sacred retreat, into which they cannot, dare not enter."†

It must be evident, however, that the great ends of the domestic economy, cannot be kept in view, nor the moral power of it displayed, unless the heads of it rightly understand their duty, and have a disposition properly to perform it. They must be Christians in reality, or no Christian government can be maintained. Where religion is wanting as the basis of their union, these happy fruits of it cannot be expected. The inferior and secondary object may be accomplished in the absence of parental piety, though neither so certainly, nor so effectually; but as to the more sublime and permanent end of the family constitution, which connects its members with the church of God on earth, and the com-

pany of the redeemed in heaven, this cannot be looked for, where the father and the mother are destitute of true religion. Oh, how many interesting households are to be found, where all the mere social virtues are cultivated with assiduity, where the domestic charities all flourish, and public excellence is cherished, but which, on account of the want of vital godliness, are still losing the highest end of their union, are carrying on no preparatory course of education for the skies, and are destined to be swept away with the wreck of the nations that know not God, and the wicked who shall be turned into hell. Alas, alas! that from such sweet scenes, such lovely retreats of connubial love and domestic peace, to which learning, science, wealth, elegance, have been admitted, religion should be excluded; and that while many wise and interesting guests are continually welcomed to the house, *He* only should be refused, who blessed the little family of Bethany; who, wherever he goes, carries salvation in his train, and gives immortality to the joys which would otherwise perish for ever.

Precious, indeed, are the joys of a happy family; but, oh, how fleet! How soon *must* the circle be broken up, how suddenly *may* it be! What scenes of delight, resembling gay visions of fairy bliss, have all been unexpectedly wrapt in shadow and gloom, by misfortune, by sickness, by death. The last enemy has entered the paradise, and by expelling one of its tenants, has embittered the scene to the rest; the ravages of death have been in some cases followed by the desolations of poverty, and they who once dwelt together in the happy enclosure, have been separated and scattered to meet no more. But religion, true religion, if it be possessed, will gather them together again, after this destruction of their earthly ties, and conduct them to another paradise, into which no calamity shall enter, and from which, no joy shall ever depart.

Happy then would it be, for all who stand related by these household ties, if the bonds of nature were hallowed and rendered permanent by those of divine grace. To found our union on any basis which does not contain religion in its formation, is to erect it on a quicksand, and to expose it to the fury of a thousand billows, each of which may overturn the fabric of our comfort in a moment: but to rest it upon religion, is to found it upon a rock, where we shall individually still find a refuge, when the nearest and the dearest relations are swept away by the tide of dissolution.

It is a pleasing reflection, that the domestic constitution depends not for its existence, its laws, its right administration, or its rich advantages, either upon family possessions, or the forms of national policy. It may live and flourish in all its tender charities, and all its sweet felicities, and all its moral power, in the cottage as well as in the mansion; under the shadow of liberty, and even under the scorching heat of tyranny. Like the church of which it is in some respects the emblem, it accommodates itself to every changing form of surrounding society, to every nation and to every age.—Forming with the church the only two institutions ever set up by God, as to their frame work; like its kindred institute, it remains amidst the ruins of the fall, the lapse of ages, and the changes of human affairs, the monument of what has been, the standing prediction of what shall be. Tyrants that crush the liberties of a state, cannot destroy the constitution of the family: and even persecutors that silence the preacher, and scatter the congregation, cannot hush the voice of parental instruction, or extinguish parental influence. Religion, hunted and driven by human power from the place of public concourse, would still find a retreat, as it often has done under such circumstances, in the house-

\* Anderson.

† Mr. Anderson, in support and illustration of this beautiful sentiment, brings forward the families of the Kenites, and the Rechabites, whose history he traces, and shows it to be like a pure and vigorous stream, urging its course through a turbid lake, with the waters of which it refuses to blend, and maintaining its own characteristic, amidst surrounding impurity.

hold of faith; and there would keep alive upon the family altar, that holy fire, with which the sacrifices of the temple, under happier auspices, shall be offered. Neither families nor the church of the redeemed, shall ever be entirely lost, whatever changes the world may yet have to pass through: "but blessing and being blest, will of themselves alone one day introduce the millennium."\*

To all, therefore, who are united in the bonds of this relationship, I offer the consideration of these pages: which prescribe duties, and present advantages, belonging alike to all. Domestic happiness, in many respects, resembles the manna which was granted to the Israelites, in the wilderness; like that precious food, it is the gift of God which cometh down from heaven; it is not to be purchased with money; it is dispensed alike to the rich and to the poor, and accommodates itself to every taste; it is given with an abundance that meets the wants of all who desire it; to be obtained, it must be religiously sought in God's own way of bestowing it; and is granted to man as a refreshment during his pilgrimage through this wilderness, to the celestial Canaan.

MARRIAGE IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE DOMESTIC CONSTITUTION: this, says the apostle "is honorable in all;" and he has condemned, as "a doctrine of devils," the opinions of those by whom it is forbidden. It is an institute of God, was established in Eden, was honored by the personal attendance of Christ, and furnished an occasion for the first of that splendid series of miracles, by which he proved himself to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. But there is another mark of distinction put upon it by the Holy Ghost, where it is said, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Eph. v. 32. Many commentators, I am aware, consider the term *mystery* as having no allusion to the nuptial tie, but as applying exclusively to the union of Christ and the church. If this be the case, it seems difficult to account for the introduction of this union at all, or to explain what bearing it has upon the subject in hand. Besides, the two-fold reference to the mediatorial undertaking of Christ, which is made by the apostle, when he enforces the duties of husband and wife, seems to confirm the opinion, that he represents the conjugal union, as a type or symbol of the close and endearing relation in which the church stands to its divine Redeemer. Nothing can throw a higher sanctity over this connection, nor invest it with greater honor than such a view of it. Distinguishing, as it does, man from brutes; providing not only for the continuance, but for the comfort of our species; containing at once, the source of human happiness, and of all those virtuous emotions and generous sensibilities, which refine and adorn the character of man, it can never as a general subject be guarded with too much solicitous vigilance, nor be contracted, in particular instances, with too much prudence and care.

In proportion to the importance of the connection itself, must be a right view and a due performance of the obligations arising out of it.

*First.* THERE ARE DUTIES COMMON TO BOTH PARTIES.

*Secondly.* THERE ARE DUTIES MORE PARTICULARLY ENJOINED UPON EACH.

MY FIRST object will be to state those duties WHICH ARE COMMON TO BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE.

1. The first which I mention, and which is the ground of all the rest, is LOVE.

Let this be wanting, and marriage is degraded at once into a brutal or a sordid compact. This duty, which, though for reasons which we shall consider

in due place, is specially enjoined on the husband, belongs equally to the wife. It must be mutual, or there can be no happiness; none for the party which does not love, for how dreadful the idea of being chained for life to an individual for whom we have no affection; to be almost ever in the company of a person from whom we are driven back by revulsion, yet driven back upon a bond which prevents all separation and escape; nor can there be any happiness for the party that does love; such an unrequited affection must soon expire, or live only to consume that wretched heart in which it burns. A married couple without mutual regard, is one of the most pitiable spectacles on earth. They cannot, and, indeed, in ordinary circumstances, ought not to separate, and yet they remain united only to be a torment to each other. They serve one important purpose, however, in the history of mankind, and that is, to be a beacon to all who are yet disengaged, to warn them against the sin and folly of forming this union, upon any other basis than that of a pure and mutual attachment; and to admonish all that are so united, to watch with most assiduous vigilance their mutual regard, that nothing be allowed to damp the sacred flame.

As the union should be formed on the basis of love, so should great care be taken, especially in the early stages of it, that nothing might arise to unsettle or loosen our attachments. Whatever knowledge we may obtain of each other's tastes and habits before marriage, it is neither so accurate, so comprehensive, nor so impressive, as that which we acquire by living together; and it is of prodigious consequence, that when little defects are first noticed, and trivial faults and oppositions first occur, they should not be allowed to produce an unfavorable impression upon the mind. The remarks of Bishop Jeremy Taylor in his inimitably beautiful sermon, entitled, "The Marriage Ring," are so much in point, that I shall introduce a long extract in reference to this idea.

"Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation; every little thing can blast an infant blossom, and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when first they begin to curl like the locks of a new weaned boy; but when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have by the warm rays of the sun, and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken: so are the early unions of an unfixed marriage; watchful and observant, jealous and busy, inquisitive and careful, and apt to take alarm at every unkind word. For infirmities do not manifest themselves in the first scenes, but in the succession of a long society; and it is not chance or weakness when it appears at first, but it is want of love or prudence, or it will be so expounded; and that which appears ill at first, usually affrights the inexperienced man or woman, who makes unequal conjectures, and fancies mighty sorrows by the proportions of the new and early unkindness. It is a very great passion, or a huge folly, or a certain want of love, that cannot preserve the colors and beauties of kindness, so long as public honesty requires a man to wear their sorrows for the death of a friend. *Plutarch* compares a new marriage to a vessel before the hoops are on, every thing dissolves its tender compaginations; but when the joints are stiffened and are tied by a firm compliance and proportioned bending, scarcely can it be dissolved without fire, or the violence of iron. After the hearts of the man and the wife are endeared and hardened by a mutual confidence and experience, longer than artifice and pretence can last, there are a great

\* See Anderson and Dwight.



many remembrances, and some things present, that dash all little unkindnesses in pieces.

"Let a man and wife be careful to stifle little things, that as fast as they spring, they be cut down and trod upon; for if they be suffered to grow by numbers, they make the spirit peevish, and the society troublesome, and the affections loose and uneasy by an habitual aversion. Some men are more vexed with a fly than with a wound; and when the gnats disturb our sleep, and the reason is disquieted, but not perfectly awakened, it is often seen that he is fuller of trouble than if in the day light of his reason he were to contest with a potent enemy. In the frequent little accidents of a family, a man's reason cannot always be awake; and when his discourses are imperfect and a trifling trouble makes him yet more restless, he is soon betrayed to the violence of passion. It is certain that the man or woman are in a state of weakness and folly then, when they can be troubled with a trifling accident; and therefore it is not good to tempt their affections, when they are in that state of danger. In this case the caution is, to subtract fuel from the sudden flame; for stubble, though it be quickly kindled, yet it is as soon extinguished, if it be not blown by a pertinacious breath, or fed with new materials. Add no new provocations to the accident, and do not inflame this, and peace will soon return, and the discontent will pass away soon, as the sparks from the collision of a flint; ever remembering, that discontents proceeding from daily little things, do breed a secret undiscernable disease, which is more dangerous than a fever proceeding from a discerned notorious surfeit."

If they would preserve love, let them be sure to study most accurately each other's tastes and distastes, and most anxiously abstain from whatever, even in the minutest things, they know to be contrary to them. The ancients in their conjugal allegories, used to represent Mercury standing by Venus, to signify that by fair language, and sweet entreaties, the minds of each other should be united.

If they would preserve love, let them most carefully avoid all curious and frequently repeated distinctions of MINE and THINE: for this hath caused all the laws, and all the suits, and all the wars in the world; let them who have but one person, have also but one interest. Instances may occur in which there may and must be, a separate investiture of property, and a sovereign independent right of disposal in the woman; in this case, the most anxious care should be taken by the husband not to attempt to invade that right, and by the wife, neither ostentatiously to speak of it, nor rigidly to claim it, nor selfishly to exercise it. In ordinary cases, "they should be heirs to each other, if they die childless; and if there be children, the wife should be with them a partner in the inheritance. But during their life the use and employment is common to both their necessities, and in this there is no other difference of right, but that the man hath the dispensation of all, and may keep it from his wife, just as the governor of a town may keep it from the right owner; he hath the *power*, but not the *right* to do so."

2. MUTUAL RESPECT is a duty of married life; for though as we shall afterwards consider, especial reverence is due from the wife, yet is respect due from the husband also.

As it is difficult to respect those, who are not entitled to it on any other ground than superior rank or common relationship, it is of immense consequence, that we should present to each other, that conduct which deserves respect and commands it. Moral esteem is one of the firmest supports, and strongest guards of love; and a high degree of excellence cannot fail to produce such esteem. We

are more accurately known to each other in this connection, than either to the world, or even to our own servants and children. The privacies of such a relationship lay open our motives, and all the interior of our character; so that we are better known to each other than we are to ourselves. If therefore, we would be respected, we should be respectable.—Charity covers a multitude of faults, it is true; but we must not presume too far upon the credulity and blindness of affection; there is a point beyond which, even love cannot be blind to the crimson coloring of a guilty action. Every piece of really sinful conduct, the impropriety of which cannot be mistaken, tends to sink us in each other's esteem, and thus to remove the safeguards of affection.—Perhaps this has not been sufficiently thought of in wedded life, the parties of which have been sometimes anxious merely to cover their delinquencies from the world, forgetful that it is a dreadful thing to lose their mutual respect. It is delightfully striking to observe, how some pairs, of eminent moral worth, regard each other; what reverence is blended with their love, and how like to angel forms of heavenly excellence they appear to one another.

In all the conduct of the conjugal state then, there should be the most marked and unvarying mutual respect even in little things: there must be no searching after faults, nor examining, with microscopic scrutiny such as cannot be concealed; no reproachful epithets; no rude contempt; no incivility; no cold neglect; there should be courtesy without ceremony; politeness without formality; attention without slavery; it should, in short, be the tenderness of love, supported by esteem, and guided by politeness. And then, we must maintain our mutual respectability before others; strangers, friends, servants, children, must all be taught to respect us, from what they see in our own behavior. It is in the highest degree improper, for either party to do an action, to say a word, or assume a look, that shall have the remotest tendency to lower the other in public esteem.

3. MUTUAL ATTACHMENT TO EACH OTHER'S SOCIETY, is a common duty of husband and wife.

We are united to be companions; to live together, to walk together, to talk together. The husband is commanded "to dwell with the wife according to knowledge." "This," says Mr. Jay, "intends nothing less than residence, opposed to absence and roving. It is absurd, for those who have no prospect of dwelling together, to enter this state; and those who are already in it, should not be unnecessarily abroad. Circumstances of various kinds will doubtless render occasional excursions unavoidable; but let a man return as soon as the design of his absence is accomplished, and let him always travel with the words of Solomon in his mind, 'As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.' Can a man while from home, discharge the duties he owes to his household? Can he discipline his children? Can he maintain the worship of God in his family? I know it is the duty of the wife to lead the devotion in the absence of the husband; and she should take it up as a cross, if not for the time as a privilege. Few, however, are thus disposed, and hence one of the sanctuaries of God for weeks and months together is shut up.—I am sorry to say, that there are some husbands who seem fonder of any society than the company of their wives. It appears in the disposal of their leisure hours. How few of these are appropriated to the wife! The evenings are the most domestic periods of the day. To these the wife is peculiarly entitled—she is now most free from her numerous cares, and most at liberty to enjoy reading and conversation. It is a sad reflection upon a man when he is fond of spending his evenings abroad.—

It implies something bad, and it predicts something worse."

And then to ensure as far as possible, the society of her husband, at his own fire side, let the wife be "a keeper at home," and do all in her power to render that fire side as attractive as good temper, neatness, and cheerful, affectionate conversation can make it; let her strive to make his own home, the soft green on which his heart loves to repose in the sunshine of domestic enjoyment. We can easily imagine, that even in Paradise, when man had no apparition of guilt, no visions of crime, no spectral voice from a troubled conscience, to make him dread solitude, and flee from it, that even then, Adam liked not, on his return from the labor of dressing the garden, to find Eve absent from their bower, but wanted the smile of her countenance to light up his own, and the music of her voice to be the melody of his soul. Think, then, how much more in his fallen estate, with guilt upon his conscience, and care pressing upon his heart, does man now, on coming from the scenes of his anxious toil, need the aid of woman's companionship, to drive away the swarm of buzzing cares, that light upon the heart to sting it; to soothe the brow ruffled with sadness; to tranquillize the bosom agitated with passion; and at once to reprove and comfort the mind that has in some measure yielded to temptation. O, woman! thou knowest the hour when "the good man of the house" will return, at mid-day, while the sun is yet bowing down the laborer with the fierceness of his beams, or at evening, when the heat and burden of the day are past; do not let him, at such a time, when he is weary with exertion, and faint with discouragement, find, upon his coming to his habitation, that the foot which should hasten to meet him, is wandering at a distance, that the soft hand which should wipe away the sweat from his brow, is knocking at the door of other houses: nor let him find a wilderness, where he should enter a garden; confusion, where he ought to see order; or filth that disgusts, where he might hope to behold neatness, that delights and attracts. If this be the case, who can wonder, that in the anguish of disappointment, and in the bitterness of a neglected and heart stricken husband, he turns away from his door, for that comfort which he wished to enjoy at home, and that society which he hoped to find in his wife, and put up with the substitutes for both which he finds in the houses of other men, or in the company of other women.

United to be associates then, let man and wife be as much in each other's society as possible: and there must be something wrong in domestic life, when they need the aid of balls, routs, plays, card parties, to relieve them from the tedium produced by home pursuits. I thank God, I am a stranger to that taste, which leads a man to flee from his own comfortable parlor, and the society of his wife, from the instruction and recreation contained in a well stored library, or the evening rural walk, when the business of the day is over, to scenes of public amusement for enjoyment; to my judgment, the pleasures of home, and of home society, when home and home society, are all that could be desired, are such as never cloy, and need no change, but from one kindred scene to another. I am sighing and longing, perhaps in vain, for a period, when society shall be so elevated, and so purified; when the love of knowledge will be so intense, and the habits of life will be so simple; when religion and morality will be so generally diffused that men's homes will be the seat and circle of their pleasures; when in the society of an affectionate and intelligent wife, and of well educated children, each will find his greatest earthly delight; and when it will be felt to be no more necessary to happiness, to quit their own

fire side for the ball room or the concert, than it is to go from the well spread table, to the public feast, to satisfy the cravings of a healthy appetite: then will it be no longer imposed upon us to prove, that public amusements are *improper*, for they will be found to be *unnecessary*.

But the pleasures of home must not be allowed to interfere with the calls and claims of public duty. Wives must not ask, and husbands must not give, that time which is demanded for the cause of God and man. This is an age of active charity, and the great public institutions which are set up, cannot be kept in operation, without great sacrifices of time and leisure by very many persons. Those, who by their wisdom, talents, rank, or property, receive the confidence of the public, must stand prepared to fill up and conduct the executive departments of our societies; nor should they allow the soft allurements of their own houses, to draw them away from what is obviously the post of duty. We have known some, who, till they entered into wedded life, were the props and pillars of our institutions, yield so far to the solicitations of their new and dearest earthly friend, as to vacate their seat at the board of management, for ever after. It is, indeed, a costly way of contributing to the cause of religion and humanity, to give those evening hours which could be spent so pleasantly in a country walk, or in the joint perusal of some interesting volume; but who can do good, or ought to wish to do it, without sacrifices? I know an eminently holy and useful minister, who told the lady to whom he was about to be united, that one of the conditions of their marriage was, that she should never ask him for that time, which, on any occasion, he felt it to be his duty to give to God. And surely, any woman might feel herself more blessed in having sometimes to endure the loss of a husband's society, whose presence and talents were coveted by all public institutions, than in being left to the unmolested enjoyment of the company of one, whose assistance was coveted by none.

#### 4. MUTUAL FORBEARANCE is another duty.

This we owe to all, not excepting the stranger, or an enemy; and most certainly it must not be denied to our nearest and dearest earthly friend. For the charity that suffereth long and is kind; that envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; that doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that covereth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things: for this charity there is both need and room in every relation of life. Wherever sin or imperfection exists, there is scope for the forbearance of love. There is no perfection upon earth. Lovers, it is true, often fancy they have found it; but the more sober judgment of husbands and wives, generally corrects the mistake; and first impressions of this kind, generally pass away with first love. We should all enter the marriage state, remembering that we are about to be united to a fallen creature; and as in every case, as Mr. Bolton remarks, it is not two angels that have met together, but two sinful children of Adam, from whom must be looked for much weakness and waywardness, we must make up our minds to some imperfection; and remembering that we have no small share of our own that calls for the forbearance of the other party, shall exercise the patience that we ask. Where both have infirmities, and they are so constantly together, innumerable occasions will be furnished, if we are eager, or even willing to avail ourselves of the opportunities for those contentions, which, if they do not produce a permanent suppression of love, lead to its temporary interruption. Many things we should connive



at others we should pass by with an unprovoked mind, and in all things most carefully avoid even what at first may seem to be an innocent disputation. Affection does not forbid, but actually demands that we should mutually point out our faults; but this should be done in all the meekness of wisdom, united with all the tenderness of love, lest we only increase the evil we intend to remove, or substitute a greater one in its place. Justice, as well as wisdom, requires that in every case, we set the good qualities against the bad; and in most cases we shall find some redeeming excellences which, if they do not reconcile us to the failings we deplore, should at least teach us to bear them with patience: and the more we contemplate these better aspects of the character, the brighter will they appear, for it is an indubitable fact, that while faults diminish, virtues magnify, in proportion as they are steadily contemplated. As to bitterness of language, and violence of conduct, this is so utterly disgraceful, and in the circle which I am accustomed to instruct, altogether so rare and unusual, that it scarcely need be introduced even by way of cautioning against it. The ancients, we are informed, took the gall from their nuptial sacrifices, and cast it behind the altar, to intimate the removal of all bitterness from the marriage state.

5. **MUTUAL ASSISTANCE** is the duty of husbands and wives.

This applies to the *cares of life*. Women are not usually very conversant with matters of trade, but still their counsel may be sought in a thousand cases with propriety and advantage. The husband should never undertake any thing of importance, without communicating the matter to his wife; who, on her part, instead of shrinking from the responsibility of a counsellor, and leaving him to struggle alone with his difficulties and perplexities, should invite him to communicate freely all his anxieties: for if she cannot counsel, she can comfort; if she cannot relieve his cares, she can help to bear them; if she cannot direct the course of his trade, she may the current of his feelings; if she cannot open any source of earthly wisdom, she can spread the matter before the Father and fountain of lights. Many men under the idea of delicacy to their wives, keep all their difficulties to themselves, which only prepares them to feel the stroke the heavier when it does come.

And then, as the wife should be willing to help the husband, in matters of business, he should be willing to share with her, the burden of domestic anxieties and fatigue. Some go too far, and utterly degrade the female head of the family, by treating her as if her honesty or ability could not be trusted in the management of the domestic economy. They keep the money, and dole it out as if they were parting with their life's blood, grudging every shilling they dispense, and requiring an account as rigid as they would from a suspected servant; they take charge of every thing, give out every thing, interfere in every thing. This is to despoil a woman of her authority, to thrust her from her proper place, to insult and degrade her before her children and servants. Some, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme, and take no share in any thing. My heart has ached to see the slavery of some devoted, hard working, and ill used wives; after laboring all day amidst the ceaseless toils of a young and numerous family, they have had to pass the hours of evening in solitude, while their husbands, instead of coming home to cheer them by their society, or to relieve them for only half an hour of their fatigue, have been either at a party or a sermon: and then have these hapless women had to wake and watch the live long night, over a sick or restless babe, while the men whom they accepted as the partner of their sorrows, were sleeping by their side, unwill-

ing to give a single hour of their slumber, though it was to allow a little repose to their toil-worn wives. Why, even the irrational creatures shame such men; for it is a well known fact, that the male bird takes his turn upon the nest during the season of incubation, to allow the female time to renew her strength by food and rest: and with her, also, goes in diligent quest of food, and feeds the young ones when they cry. No man should think of marrying, who does not stand prepared to share, as far as he can do it with his wife, the burden of domestic cares.

They should be helpful to each other *in the concerns of personal religion*. This is clearly implied in the apostle's language. "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"\* Where both parties are unconverted, or only one of them is yet a partaker of true piety, there should be the most anxious, judicious, and affectionate efforts for their salvation. How heathenish a state is it, to enjoy together the comforts of marriage, and then travel in company to eternal perdition; to be mutual comforters on earth, and then mutual tormentors in hell; to be companions in felicity in time, and companions in torment through eternity. And where both parties are real Christians, there should be the exercise of a constant reciprocal solicitude, watchfulness and care, in reference to their spiritual and eternal welfare. One of the ends which every believer should propose to himself, on entering the marriage state, is to secure one faithful friend, at least, who will be a helpmate for him in reference to another world, and to assist him in the great business of his soul's salvation, and that will pray for him and with him; one that will affectionately tell him of his sins and his defects, viewed in the light of a Christian; one that will stimulate and draw him by the power of a holy example, and the sweet force of persuasive words; one that will warn him in temptation, comfort him in dejection, and in every way assist him in his pilgrimage to the skies. The highest end of the connubial state is lost, if it be not rendered helpful to our piety; and yet this end is too generally neglected, even by professors of religion. Do we converse with each other as we ought on the high themes of redemption by Christ, and eternal salvation? Do we study each other's dispositions, snares, troubles, decays in piety, that we may apply suitable remedies? Do we exhort one another daily, lest we should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Do we practice fidelity without censoriousness; and administer praise without flattery? Do we invite one another to the most quickening and edifying means of a public nature, and recommend the perusal of such instructive and improving books as we have found beneficial to ourselves? Do we mutually lay open the state of our minds on the subject of personal religion, and state our perplexities, our joys, our fears, our sorrows? Alas, alas, who must not blush at their neglects in these particulars?—And yet, such neglect is as criminal, as it is common. Fleeing from the wrath to come, and yet not doing all we can to aid each other's escape! Contending side by side for the crown of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, and yet not doing all we can to ensure each other's success! Is this love? Is this the tenderness of connubial affection?

This mutual help should extend to the *maintenance of all the habits of domestic order, discipline, and piety*. The husband is to be the prophet, priest, and king of the family, to instruct their minds, to lead their devotions, and to govern their tempers; but in all that relates to these important objects, the wife is to be of one mind with him. They are in these mat-

\* 1 Corinthians, vii. 16.

ters, to be workers together, neither of them leaving the other to labor alone, much less opposing or thwarting what is done. "When the sun shines, the moon disappears; when he sets, she appears and shines; so when the husband is at home, he leads domestic worship, when he is absent, the wife must ever take his place." Some men refer the instruction of young children exclusively to their wives, and some wives, as soon as the children are too old to be taught upon the knee, think that they are exclusively the subjects of *paternal care*. This is a mistake in the important economy of the family, the members of which are never too young to be taught and disciplined by the father, nor too old to be admonished and warned by the mother: *he* may sometimes have a great influence in awing the rude spirits of the younger branches; while *her* soft persuasive accents may have delightful power to melt or break the hard and stubborn hearts of older ones.—Thus they who have a joint interest in a family, must attend to them in the exercise of a joint labor.

They must be helpful to each other in *works of humanity and religious benevolence*.

Their mutual influence should be exerted, not in restraining, but in stimulating zeal, compassion, and liberality. What a beautiful picture of domestic life is drawn by the pen of the Old Testament historian. "And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman: and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, and it shall be, that when he cometh to us, he shall turn in thither.—And it fell on a day that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.\* Every part of this scene is lovely. The generous and pious wish of the wife, to provide accommodations for a destitute and dependant prophet; her prompt and prudent effort to interest her husband in the scheme of her benevolence; her discreet and modest keeping of her place in not acting without his permission; her dignified claim of a right to be associated with him in this work of mercy, for said she, let us make a little chamber on the wall; all is delightful, and as it should be, on her part: and no less so on the part of the man; for there was no surly refusal, no proud rejection of the plan, because it did not originate with him, no covetous plea for setting it aside, on the ground of expense. Delighted, as every husband should be, to gratify the benevolent wishes, and support the liberal schemes of his wife, so far as prudence will allow, he consented; the little chamber was erected, and furnished by this holy pair, and soon occupied by the prophet: and never was a generous action more speedily or more richly rewarded. Elisha had no means of his own, by which to acknowledge the kindness; but he who said in after times, "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward," took upon himself, as he does in every instance, the cause of his necessitous servant, and most munificently repaid the generous deed.

A lovelier scene is not to be found on earth, than that of a pious couple, employing their mutual influence, and the hours of their retired companionship, in stirring up each other's hearts to deeds of mercy and religious benevolence; not Adam and Eve in Paradise, with the unspotted robes of their innocence about them, engaged in propping the vine, or trailing the rose of that holy garden, presented to the eyes of angels a more interesting spectacle than

this. What a contrast does such a couple present, to the pairs which are almost every where to be found, whose calculations are not what they can save from unnecessary expense to bestow upon the cause of God and humanity, but what they can abstract or withhold from the claims of benevolence, to lavish upon splendid furniture, or domestic luxuries. Are there no wives who attempt to chill the ardor, to limit the beneficence, to stint the charities of their husbands; who, by their incessant and quarrelsome suggestions, that he is doing too much for others, and too little for his own family, drive the good man, notwithstanding he is lord of his own property, to exercise his liberality in secret, and bestow his charities by stealth? And what is oftentimes the object of such women? nothing more than the pride of ambition, or the folly of vanity. Only that they might have these taxations and parings of charity, to spend upon dress, furniture, and parties.

Perhaps the question will be asked, whether it is proper for a wife to give away the property of her husband in acts of humanity, or religious benevolence? Such an inquiry ought to be unnecessary; for no woman should be driven to the alternative of either doing nothing for the cause of God and man, or doing what she can by stealth. A sufficient sum ought to be placed at her disposal, to enable her to enjoy the luxury of doing good. Why should not she appear in her own name upon the honorable list of benefactors, and shine forth in her peculiar and separate glory, instead of being always lost in the radiance of *our* recorded mercy? Why should *she* have no sphere of benevolent effort? Why should *we* monopolize to ourselves the blessings of those that are ready to perish? It is degrading a married female to allow her no discretion in this matter, no liberty of distribution, no power to dispense, even in cases that concern her sex, but to compel her to beg first of a husband, *that* which others come to beg of her. If, however, she be unhappily united to a Nabab, a churl, whose sordid, grasping, covetous disposition, will yield nothing to the claims of humanity or religion, may she then make up for the deficiency of her husband, and diffuse his property unknown to him? I am strongly tempted to answer this question in the affirmative; for if in any instance we may deviate from the ordinary rule, and taking the man at his own word, which he uttered, when in the solemn act of matrimony, he said, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," may invest the wife with a joint proprietorship, and a right of appropriation, it is in such a case as this. But still, we must not sacrifice general principles, to special cases; and therefore, I say to every female in such circumstances, obtain if you can, a separate and fixed allowance for charitable distribution; but if even *this* be not possible, obtain one for personal expenses, and by a most rigid frugality, save all you can from dress and decoration, for the hallowed purpose of relieving the miseries of your fellow creatures.

#### 6. MUTUAL SYMPATHY is required.

Sickness may call for this, and females seem both formed and inclined by nature to yield it.

"O woman! in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light quivering aspen made;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou!"

Unwilling, and, indeed, unable to subscribe to the former part of this description, I do most readily assent to the truth of the latter. If we *could* do without her and be happy in health, what are we in



sickness without her presence and her tender offices? Can we smooth, as woman can, the pillow on which the sick man lays his head? No. We cannot administer the medicine or the food as she can. There is a softness in her touch, a lightness in her step, a skill in her arrangements, a sympathy looking down upon us from her beaming eye, which ours wants. Many a female, by her devoted and kind attentions in a season of sickness, has drawn back to herself that cold and alienated heart, which neither her charms could hold, nor her claims recover. I entreat you, therefore, married females, to put forth all your power to soothe and please in the season of your husband's sickness. Let him see you willing to make any sacrifices of pleasure, ease, or sleep, to minister to his comfort. Let there be a tenderness in your manner, a wakeful attention and sympathy in your look, a something that seems to say, your only comfort in his affliction, is to employ yourselves in alleviating it. Hearken with patience and kindness to the tale of his lighter, and even of his imaginary woes. A cold, heartless, awkward, unsympathising woman, is an exception from the general rule, and, therefore, the severer libel upon her sex.

Nor is this sympathy exclusively the duty of the wife; but belongs equally to the husband. He cannot, it is true, perform the same offices for her, which she can discharge for him; but much he can do, and all he can he should do. Her sicknesses are generally more numerous and heavy than his; she is likely, therefore, to make more frequent calls upon his tender interest and attention. Many of her ailments are the consequence of becoming his wife; she was, perhaps, in full vigor, till she became a mother, and from that time, never had a moment's perfect ease or strength again. That event which sent into his heart the joys of a parent, dismissed from her frame the comforts of health. And shall he look with discontent, and indifference, and insensibility, upon that delicate flower, which, before he transplanted it to *his* garden, glowed in beauty and in fragrance, to the admiration of every spectator? Shall he *now* cease to regard it with any pleasure, or sympathy, and seem as if he wished it gone, to make room for another, forgetting that it was *he* that sent the worm to the root, and caused its head to droop, and its colors to fade? Husbands, I call upon you for all the skill and tenderness of love, on behalf of your wives, if they are weak and sickly. Watch by their couch, talk with them, pray with them, walk with them, wake with them. In all their afflictions, be you afflicted. Never listen heedlessly to their complaints; and, oh, by all that is sacred in conjugal affection, I implore you never, by your cold neglect, or petulant expressions, or discontented look, to call up in their imaginations, unusually sensitive at such a season, the phantom of a fear, that the disease which has destroyed their health, has done the same for your affection. Oh! spare their bosom the agonizing pangs of supposing, that they are living to be a burden to your disappointed heart. The cruelty of that man wants a name, and I know of none sufficiently emphatic, who denies his sympathy to a suffering woman, whose only sin is a broken constitution, and whose calamity is the result of her marriage. Such a man does the work of a murderer, without his punishment, and in some instances, without his reproach; but not always without his design or his remorse.

But sympathy should be exercised by man and wife, not only in reference to their sicknesses, but to all their afflictions, whether personal or relative; all their sorrows should be common: like two strings in unison, the chord of grief should never be struck in the heart of one, without causing a corres-

ponding vibration in the heart of the other; or, like the surface of the lake answering to the heaven, it should be impossible for calmness and sunshine to be upon one, while the other is agitated and cloudy: heart should answer to heart, and face to face.

Such are the duties common to both; the obligations peculiarly enjoined upon each, will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SPECIAL DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."—EPHESIANS v. 22—32.

OBSERVE the sublime and transcendently interesting fact, which stands amidst the duties of domestic life, as stated by the apostle, in the language quoted above, like the sun in the centre of the planets, illuminating, impelling, and uniting them all. Every part of this most comprehensive and beautiful passage is inimitably striking. The design of the whole, is to magnify Christ's love to the church; in order to this, the moral condition of the church, previous to the transforming work of redeeming grace, is supposed to be that of loathsome impurity; yet, notwithstanding this, he exercises the tenderest compassion for her welfare, and is not repelled by excessive defilement. To effect her redemption, he does not merely employ the operations of his power and of his wisdom, but surrendered himself into the hands of divine justice, that, as a sacrifice of atonement, he might ransom the object of his regard, at the price of his blood; thus manifesting an affection stronger than death, and "which many waters could not quench." The ultimate design of this act of mysterious humiliation, is, to render her in some measure worthy of his regard, and meet for that indissoluble union with himself, into which, as his illustrious bride, she was about to be received; for this purpose, the efficient influences of the Holy Ghost were to be poured upon her mind, that, in the cordial reception of the truth, she might be purified from iniquity, have the germ of every virtue implanted in her heart, and the robe of righteousness spread over her frame; till, at length, under the dispensations of his providence, the means of his grace, and the sanctifying agency of his Spirit, the last spot of moral defilement might be effaced, the last wrinkle of spiritual decay removed, and, like "the king's daughter, all glorious within," and with her clothing of wrought gold, she might be presented, covered with the beauties of holiness, to the Lord Jesus, in that day, "when he shall come to be

admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe." Behold, what manner of love is this!—And it is *this* most amazing, this unparalleled act of mercy, that is employed by the apostle, as the motive of all Christian conduct. He knew nothing of moral philosophy, if by this expression be meant, the abstract principles of ethics. He left as he found them, the grounds of moral obligations, but he did not enforce virtue by a mere reference to our relations to God as creatures, but by a reference to our relation to Christ, as redeemed sinners. He fetched his motives to good works, from the cross; he made the power of that to be felt, not only on the conscience, as supplying the means of pardon, but upon the heart, as furnishing the most cogent, and at the same time, the most insinuating argument for sanctification: he not only irradiates the gloom of despondency, or melts the stubborn obstinacy of unbelief, or stays the reckless progress of despair, by inspiring a feeling of hope; no, but by the death of a crucified Saviour, and an exhibition of his most unbounded compassion, he attacks the vices of the depraved heart, and inculcates all the virtues of the renewed mind. The doctrine of the cross is the substance of Christian truth, and the great support of Christian morals: and the apostle's mind and heart were full of it. Does he enforce humility?—It is thus: "Let the mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." An unreserved devotedness to God? It is thus: "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body and in your spirit, which are his." Brotherly love? It is thus: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." A forgiving temper? It is thus: "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Benevolence to the poor? It is thus: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty might be made rich."\* And who but an apostle would have thought of enforcing conjugal affection by a reference to the love of Christ to his church.—And he has done this; and has thus represented redeeming love, as a kind of holy atmosphere, surrounding the Christian on all sides, accompanying him every where, sustaining his spiritual existence, the very element in which his religion lives, moves, and has its being. And this, indeed, is religion;—not a name, not a creed, not a form, not an abstract feeling, not an observance of times and places, not a mere mental costume or holy dress which we put on exclusively for certain seasons and occasions;—no, but a moral habit, a mental taste, the spirit of the mind, which will spontaneously appear in our language, feeling, and behavior, by a reference to Jesus Christ, as the ground of hope, and the model of imitation.

In stating the duties especially enjoined on the two parties in the conjugal union, I shall begin with those of the HUSBAND. He is commanded to LOVE his wife.

As we have already shown that this is a duty of both parties, the question very naturally arises, "For what reason is it so specially enjoined upon the husband?" Why is *he* so particularly bound to the exercise of affection? Perhaps for the following reasons: 1. Because, in the very nature of things, *he* is most in danger of failing in this duty. Placed by the Creator as "the head of the wife" and invested with a certain right to govern his household, he is more in peril of merging the tender sensibili-

ties in the predominant consciousness of superiority. 2. Because he is actually more deficient in this duty than the other party. This has ever been the case in Pagan and Mohammedan countries. In barbarous nations, especially, conjugal affection has ever been exceedingly weak, and it is probable, that even in the more civilized countries of Greece and Rome it was not so generally strong and steady, as it has since been made by Christianity. But without even going beyond the limits of Christendom, it may be truly said, that husbands are usually more deficient in love than wives; the latter, in my opinion, excel the former in tenderness, in strength, in constancy of affection. 3. Because a want of love on the part of the man, is likely to be attended with more misery to the other party: he can go to greater excesses in violence, in cruelty, in depravity. The want of this tender passion in him is likely to have a still worse effect upon his own character, and the peace of the wife, than the want of it in her: in either case, a destitution of this kind is a melancholy thing; but in him, it is on several accounts, the most to be dreaded.

The apostle lays down two models or rules, for a husband's affection; the one is, *the love which Christ has manifested for his church*; and the other, *the love which a man bears for himself*.

In directing your attention to the first, I shall exhibit the properties of Christ's love, and show in what way our affection should be conformed to his.

Christ's love was SINCERE. He did not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. In him there was no dissimulation; no epithets of endearment going forth out of feigned lips; no actions varnished over with a mere covering of love. We must be like him, and endeavor to maintain a principle of true regard in the heart, as well as a show of it in the conduct. It is a miserable thing to have to *act* the part of love, without feeling it. Hypocrisy is base in every thing, but next to religion, is most base in affection. Besides, how difficult is it to act the part well, to keep on the mask, and to support the character so as to escape detection! Oh, the misery of that woman's heart, who at length finds out to her cost, that what she has been accustomed to receive and value as the attentions of a lover, are but the tricks of a cunning dissembler.

The love of the Redeemer was ARDENT.

Let us, if we would form a correct idea of what should be the state of our hearts towards the woman of our choice, think of that affection which glowed in the bosom of the Saviour, when he lived and died for his people. We can possess, it is true, neither the same kind, nor the same degree of regard, but surely when we are referred to such an instance, if not altogether as a model, yet as a motive, it does teach us, that no weak affection is due, or should be offered to the wife of our bosom. We are told by the Saviour himself, that if he laid down his life for us, it is our duty to lay down ours for the brethren; how much more for the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." And if it be our duty to *lay down our life*, how much more to employ it while it lasts, in all the offices of an affection, strong, steady, and inventive. She that for our sake has forsaken the comfortable home, and the watchful care, and the warm embrace of her parents, has a right to expect in *our* regard, that which shall make her "forget her father's house," and cause her to feel that with respect to happiness, she is no loser by the exchange. Happy the woman, and such should every husband strive to make his wife, who can look back without a sigh upon the moment, when she quitted for ever, the guardians, the companions, and the scenes of her childhood!

The love of Christ to his church was SUPREME. He gives to the world his benevolence, but to the

\* Phil. ii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 John iv. 10, 11.  
Ephes. iv. 32. 2 Cor. viii. 9.



church his complacency. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee," said the prophet, "is mighty; he will save thee, he will rejoice over thee, with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." So must the husband regard his wife, above all else; he must "rest in his love."—He should regard her not only above all *without* his house, but above all *within*. She must take precedence both in his heart and conduct, not only of all strangers, but of all relatives, and also of all his children; he ought to love his children for her sake, rather than her for theirs. Is this always the case? On the contrary, have we not often seen men, who appear to be far more interested in their children than in their wives; and who have paid far less attention to the latter than to grown-up daughters? How especially unseemly is it, for a man to be seen fonder of the society of any other woman, than that of his wife, even where nothing more may be intended than the pleasure of her company. Nor ought he to forsake her, in his leisure hours, for any companions of his own sex, however interesting might be their manners or their conversation.

The love of Christ is **UNIFORM**. Like himself, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Conjugal affection should have the same character; it should be at all times, and in all places alike; *the same at home, as abroad*; in other persons' houses, as in our own. Has not many a wife to sigh and exclaim, "Oh that I were treated in my own house, with the same tenderness and attention as I receive in company." With what almost loathing and disgust must such a woman turn from endearments, which, under such circumstances, she can consider as nothing but hypocrisy. Home is the chief place for fond and minute attention; and she who has not to complain of a want of it there, will seldom feel the need or the inclination to complain of a want of it abroad, except it be those silly women, who would degrade their husbands, by exacting, not merely what is really kind, but what is actually ridiculous.

The love of the Redeemer was **PRACTICAL** and **LABORIOUS**. He provided every thing by his mediation for the welfare and comfort of the church, and at a cost and by exertions of which we can form no idea. It has been already declared, that both parties are to assist in the cares of life. A *good* wife cannot be an idle one. Beautiful is her portraiture, as drawn by the wise man. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.—The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy.—Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth amongst the elders of the land. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.—Her children rise up and call her blessed: her husband, also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised.—Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." **PROVERBS XXXI.**—This exquisite picture, combining as it does industry, prudence, dignity, meekness, wisdom and piety, cannot be too frequently or minutely studied, by those who would attain to high degrees of female excellence. The business of providing for the family, however, belongs chiefly to the husband. It is yours, my brethren, to rise up early, to sit up

late, to eat the bread of carefulness, and to drink, if necessary, the waters of affliction, that you may earn by the sweat of your brow, a comfortable support for the domestic circle. This is probably what the apostle meant, when he enjoined us to give honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel; the honor of maintenance, which she, in consequence of the weakness of her frame, and the frequent infirmities which the maternal relation brings upon her, is not so well able to procure for herself. In most barbarous countries, and in some half-civilized ones, the burden of manual labor falls upon the female, while her tyrant lord lives in indolence, feeding upon the industry of the helpless being whom he calls his wife, but treats as a slave. And are there no such idle tyrants in our age and country, who, so as they can live in indolence, and gratify their appetites, care not how they oppress their wives? wretches who do little or nothing for the support of the family? How utterly lost to every noble and generous sentiment must that man be whose heart cannot be moved by the entreaties or tears of an interesting woman, and who can hear in vain her pleadings for his child at her breast, and his child by her side, and who by such appeals cannot be induced to give up his daily visits to the tavern, or his habits of sauntering idleness, to attend to his neglected business, and stay the approaching tide of poverty and ruin. Such a creature is worse than a brute, he is a monster; and it seems a pity, that there is no law, and no convict ship to bear him away to a land, where if he will not work, so neither could he eat.

In general, it is for the benefit of a family, that a married woman should devote her time and attention almost exclusively to the ways of her household: her place is in the centre of domestic cares. What is gained by *her* in the *shop*, is oftentimes lost in the house, for want of the judicious superintendence of a mother and mistress. Comfort and order, as well as money, are domestic wealth; and can these be rationally expected in the absence of female arrangement? The children always want a mother's eye and hand, and should always have them. Let the husband then have the care of providing; the wife, that of distributing; for this is the rule both of reason and revelation.

And as Christ labored for his church, not only during his abode upon earth, but made provision for its welfare when he departed from our world, in like manner should the husband take care of his wife. I never could understand that custom, which is but too common, of providing by their wills so much better for the children than they do for the mother. Does this look like a *supreme* love?—Every man who raises a woman to the rank of his wife, should take care, however inferior she might have been in circumstances before their marriage, to leave her in the situation into which he brought her: for it is indeed most cruel, to leave her to be deprived at once, not only of her dearest earthly friend, but of her usual means of comfortable subsistence.

A practical affection to a wife extends, however, to every thing; it should manifest, itself in the most delicate attention to her comfort and her feelings; in consulting her tastes; in concealing her failings; in never doing any thing to degrade her, but every thing to exalt her before her children and servants; in acknowledging her excellences, and commending her efforts to please him; in meeting, and even anticipating all her reasonable requests; in short in doing all that ingenuity can invent for her substantial happiness and general comfort.

Christ's love to his church was **DURABLE** and **UNCHANGABLE**. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end," without abatement or alteration:

so ought husbands to love their wives, not only at the beginning but to the end of their union; when the charms of beauty have fled before the withering influence of disease; when the vigorous and sprightly frame has lost its elasticity, and the step has become slow and faltering; when the wrinkles of age have succeeded to the bloom of youth, and the whole person seems rather the monument, than the resemblance, of what it once was. Has she not gained in mind what she has lost in exterior fascinations? Have not her mental graces flourished amidst the ruins of personal charms? If the rose and the lily have faded on the cheek, have not the fruits of righteousness grown in the soul? If those blossoms have departed, on which the eye of youthful passion gazed with so much ardor, has it not been to give way to the ripe fruit of Christian excellence? The *woman* is not what she was, but the wife, the mother, the Christian, are better than they were. For an example of conjugal love in all its power and excellence, point me not to the bride and bridegroom displaying during the first month of their union all the watchfulness and tenderness of affection, but let me look upon the husband and wife of fifty, whose love has been tried by the lapse and the changes of a quarter of a century, and who through this period and by these vicissitudes, have grown in attachment and esteem; and whose affection, if not glowing with all the fervid heat of a midsummer's day, is still like the sunshine of an October noon, warm and beautiful, as reflected amidst autumnal tints.

But, before I go away from this view of a husband's especial duty, I must just advert to another rule of his regard which is laid down for him by the apostle. "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself." A man's children are parts of himself; his wife is himself: "for they two shall be one flesh." "This is his duty and the measure of it too; which is so plain, that, if he understands how he treats himself, there needs nothing be added concerning his demeanor towards her; for what mighty care does he take of his body, and uses it with a delicate tenderness, and cares for it in all contingencies, and watches to keep it from all evils, and studies to make for it fair provisions, and is very often led by its inclinations and desires, and does never contradict its appetites, but when they are evil, and then also not without some trouble and sorrow."—So let a man love his wife as his own body.

Can it be necessary to apply the force of *motives* to produce an appropriate attention to such a duty? If so, I appeal to your *sense of honor*. Husbands, call to recollection the wakeful assiduities, and the tender attentions, by which you won the affection and the confidence of the woman, who forsook her father and her mother, and the home of her childhood, to find a resting place for her heart in your attachment; and will ye falsify the vows you plighted, and disappoint the hopes you raised? Is it accounted a disgraceful stigma on a man's reputation, to forfeit the pledges of a *lover*? oh! how much more dishonorable to forget those of a husband!—That man has disgraced himself who furnishes just occasion to the partner of his days, to draw with a sigh, a contrast between the affectionate attention she received as a lover and as a wife.

I urge affection to a wife, by the recollection of that *solemn moment*, when, in the presence of heaven and earth, before God's minister, and in God's house, you bound yourself, by all the deeply awful formalities of a kind of oath, to throw open and keep open your heart, as the fountain of her earthly happiness, and to devote your whole life to the promotion of her welfare.

I appeal to your regard to *justice*. You have

sworn away yourself to her, and are no longer your own. You have no right to that individual, and separate, and independent kind of life, which would lead you to seek your happiness, in opposition to, or neglect of hers. "You twain are one flesh."

*Humanity* puts in its claim on behalf of your wife. It is in your power to do more for her happiness or misery, than any other being in the universe, short of God himself. An unkind husband is a tormentor of the first class. His victim can never elude his grasp, nor go beyond the reach of his cruelty, till she is kindly released by the king of terrors, who, in this instance, becomes to her an angel of light, and conducts her to the grave as to a shelter from her oppressor. For such a woman there is no rest on earth: the destroyer of her peace has her ever in his power, for she is always in his presence, or in the fear of it: the circumstances of every place, and every day, furnish him with the occasions of cruel neglect or unkindness, and it might be fairly questioned, whether there is to be found on earth, a case of greater misery, except it be that of a wretch tortured by remorse and despair, than a woman whose heart daily withers under the cold looks, the chilling words, and repulsive actions of a husband, who loveth her not. Such a man is a murderer, though he escapes in this world the murderer's doom; and by a refinement of cruelty, he employs years in conducting his victim to her end, by the slow process of a lingering death.

If nothing else can prevail, *interest* should, for no man can hate his wife, without hating himself, for "she is his own flesh." Love, like mercy, is a double blessing; and hatred, like cruelty, is a double torment. We cannot love a worthy object without rejoicing in the reflex beams of our own affection. Next to the supreme regard we cherish towards God, and which it is impossible to exercise and not hold communion with angels in the joys of heaven, conjugal love is the most beatifying passion; and to transform *this* into unkindness, is to open at the very centre of our soul, a source of poison, which, before it exudes to torture others, torments ourselves.

I cannot here avoid inserting the exquisite and touching appeal, which Mr. Jay puts into the lips of married women to their husbands. "Honor us; deal kindly with us. From many of the opportunities, and means by which you procure favorable notice, we are excluded. Doomed to the shades, few of the high places of the earth are open to us. Alternately we are adored and oppressed. From our slaves you become our tyrants. You feel our beauty, and avail yourselves of our weakness. You complain of our inferiority, but none of your behavior bids us rise. Sensibility has given us a thousand feelings, which nature has kindly denied you. Always under restraints, we have little liberty of choice. Providence seems to have been more attentive to enable us to confer happiness, than to enjoy it. Every condition has for us fresh mortifications; every relation new sorrows. We enter social bonds; it is a system of perpetual sacrifice. We cannot give life to others without hazzarding our own. We have sufferings which you do not share, cannot share. If spared, years and decays invade our charms, and much of the ardor produced by attraction departs with it. We may die. The grave covers us, and we are soon forgotten; soon are the days of your mourning ended, soon is our loss repaired: dismissed even from your speech, our name is to be heard no more—a successor may dislike it. Our children, after having a mother by nature, may fall under the control of a mother by affinity, and be mortified by distinctions made between them, and her *own* offspring. Though the duties which we have discharged invariably, be the



most important and necessary, they do not shine: they are too common to strike: they procure no celebrity: the wife, the mother fills no historic page. Our privations, our confinements, our wearisome days, our interrupted, our sleepless nights, the hours we have hung in anxious watchings over your sick and dying offspring." But we forbear.

I NOW COME TO THE DUTIES ENJOINED UPON THE WIFE.

The first I mention is *subjection*.

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."—The same thing is enjoined also in the epistle to the Colossians. Peter unites with Paul in the same strain. "Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands." Before I state the *kind* of subjection here commanded, it is necessary to state the nature of the authority to which it is to be yielded. Here I would observe, that with whatsoever kind and degree of authority the husband is invested over the wife, it is such as is in no way incompatible with, or trenches upon the strongest and tenderest affection.—And it is worthy of remark, "that the apostle does not enjoin husbands to rule, nor instruct him how, but merely to love; so that it seems to be with them, as with bishops and priests, to whom much honor is due, but yet so that if they stand upon it, and challenge it, they become less honorable."

It is such an authority, as is compatible with religion or the claims of God; for no man has a right to enjoin, and no woman is bound to obey any commands which is in opposition to the letter or spirit of the Bible. It is such an authority, as is consonant with sound reason, its injunctions must all be reasonable, for surely it is too much to expect, that a wife is to become a slave of folly, any more than of cruelty. It is an authority, that accords with the idea of companionship. It was very beautifully observed by an ancient writer, that when Adam endeavored to shift the blame of his transgression upon his wife, he did not say, the "woman thou gavest to me," no such thing, she is none of his goods, none of his possessions, not to be reckoned amongst his servants; but he said "the woman thou gavest to be with me," that is, to be my partner, the companion of my joys and sorrows.

Let conjugal authority be founded upon love, be never exercised in opposition to revelation or reason, and be regulated by the idea of companionship, and then there need no particular rules for its guidance; for within such limits, it can never degenerate into tyranny; nor can it ever oppress its subjects: to such a power any woman may bow, without degradation, for its yoke is easy and its burden light. In every society, from that which finds its centre in the father's chair, to that which in a wider circle rests upon the throne, there must be precedence vested somewhere, and some ultimate authority, some last and highest tribunal established, for the decision of which, there lies no appeal. In the domestic constitution this superiority vests in the husband: he is the head, the lawgiver, the ruler. In all matters touching the little world in the house, he is to direct, not indeed without taking counsel with his wife, but in all discordancy of view, he, unless he choose to waive his right, is to decide; and to his decision the wife should yield, and yield with grace and cheerfulness. No man ought to resign his authority, as the head of the family, no woman ought to wish him to do it: he may give up his predilections and yield to her wishes, but he must not abdicate the throne, nor resign his sceptre. Usurpation is always hateful, and it is one of the most of-

fensive exhibitions of it, where the husband is degraded into a slave of the queen mother. Such a woman looks contemptible even upon the throne. I admit it is difficult for a sensible woman to submit to imbecility, but she should have considered this before she united herself to it; having committed one error, let her not fall into a second, but give the strongest proof of her good sense which circumstances will allow her to offer, by making that concession to superiority of statica, which there is no opportunity in her case for her to do to superiority of mind. She may reason, she may persuade, she may solicit, but if ignorance cannot be convinced, nor obstinacy turned, nor kindness conciliated, she has no resource left but to—*submit*: and one of the finest scenes ever to be presented by the domestic economy, is that of a sensible woman employing her talents and address, not to subvert, but to support the authority of a weak husband; a woman who prompts but does not command, who persuades, but does not dictate, who influences, but does not compel, and who, after taking pains to conceal her beneficent interference, submits to the authority which she has both supported and guided. An opposite line of conduct is most mischievous; for weakness, when placed in perpetual contrast with superior judgment, is rarely blind to its own defects; and as this consciousness of inferiority, when united with office is always jealous, it is both watchful and resentful of any interference with its prerogative.—There must be subjection then, which, where it cannot be yielded to superior talents, because there are none, must be conceded to superiority of station.—But let husbands be cautious not to put the submission of their wives to too severe a test. It is hard, very hard, to obey a rash, indiscreet and silly ruler. "If you will be the head, remember the head is not only the seat of government, but of knowledge. If you will have the management of the ship, see that a fool is not placed at the helm. Shall the blind offer themselves as guides?"

The grounds of submission are many and strong. Waiving all motives founded upon the comparative strength of mind with which the two sexes may be gifted, I refer my female friends, to less questionable matters. Look at the *creation*; woman was made *after* the man "for Adam was first formed, then Eve." She was made *out of* man, "for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." She was made *for* man, "neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." Look at the fall. Woman occasioned it. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." She was thus punished for it, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Look at her *history*. Have not the customs of all nations, ancient and modern, savage and civilized, acknowledged her subordination? Look at the *light in which this subject is placed in the New Testament*. How strong is the language of the text, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

Let me then, my respected female friends, as you would submit to the authority of Christ, as you would adorn the station that providence has called you to occupy, as you would promote your own peace, the comfort of your husband, and the welfare of your family, admonish you, meekly and gracefully to be subject in all things, not only to the wise and good, but to the foolish and ill-deserving. You may reason, as I have said before, you may expostulate, but you must not rebel or refuse. Let it be your glory to feel how much you can endure, rather than despise the institutions of heaven, or violate

those engagements into which you voluntarily, and so solemnly entered. Let your submission be characterized by cheerfulness, and not by reluctant sullenness: let it not be preceded by a struggle, but yielded at once and for ever; let there be no holding out to the last extremity, and then a mere compulsory capitulation; but a voluntary, cheerful, and undisputed, and unrevoked concession.

2. The next duty enjoined upon a wife is REVERENCE.

"Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." This duty is nearly allied to the last, but is still somewhat different. By reverence, the apostle means nothing of slavish, or obsequious homage, but that respect and deference which are due to one whom we are commanded to obey. Your reverence will be manifest in your *words*; for instance, in your manner of speaking of him, you will avoid all that would tend to lessen him in the esteem of others; all exposure of his faults or minor weaknesses; all depreciation of his understanding or domestic rule. Such gossip is detestable and mischievous; for can any thing tend more to irritate him, than to find that you have been sinking him in the esteem of the public? Reverence will be displayed in your manner of speaking to him.—"Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord:" all flippant pertness, every thing of contemptuous consciousness of superiority, of dictation and command, of unnecessary contradiction, of pertinacious and obtrusive disputation, of scolding accusation, of angry, reproachful complaint, of noisy and obstreperous expostulation, should be avoided. Almost all domestic quarrels begin in words; and it is usually in a woman's power to prevent them by causing the law of kindness to dwell upon her lips, and calming the gusts of her husband's passion, by those soft answers which turn away wrath. Especially should she be careful how she speaks to him or even *before* him, in the company of her family or of strangers; she must not talk him into silence; nor talk *at* him; nor say any thing that is calculated to wound or degrade him, for a sting inflicted in public is doubly charged with venom; she must not endeavor to eclipse him, to engross the attention of the company to herself, to reduce him to a cypher which is valueless till she stands before him. This is not reverence; on the contrary, she should do all in her power to sustain his respectability and dignity in public esteem; and her very mode of addressing him, partaking at once of the kindness of affection, and the deference of respect, is eminently calculated to do this. And should he at any time express himself in the language of reproof, even though that reproof be causeless, or unjustly severe, let her be cautious not to forget her station, so as to be betrayed into a railing recrimination, a contemptuous silence, or a moody sullenness. Difficult, I am aware it is, to show reverence and respect, where there are no other grounds for it to rest upon than mere station; and as easy to pay it where wisdom, dignity and piety support the claims of relationship; but in proportion to the difficulty of a virtuous action, is its excellence; and hers is indeed superior virtue, who yields to the relationship of her husband that reverence which he forbids her to pay to him on account of his conduct.

Her reverence will extend itself to her *conduct*, and lead her to an incessant desire to please him in all things. It is assumed by the apostle as an indisputable and general fact, that "the married woman careth how she may please her husband." All her conduct should be framed upon this principle, to give him contentment, and to increase his delight in her. Let her appear contented with her lot, and that will do much to render him content with his; while, on the other hand, nothing is more likely to

generate discontent in his heart, than the appearance of it in her. Let her, by cheerful good humor, diffuse an air of pleasantness over his dwelling. Let her guard as much as possible against a gloomy and moody disposition, which causes her to move about with the silence and cloudiness of a spectre; for who likes to dwell in a haunted house? She should always welcome him across his threshold with a smile, and ever put forth all her ingenuity in studying to please him, by consulting his wishes, by surprising him occasionally by those unlooked for and ingenious devices of affection, which, though small in themselves, are the proofs of a mind intent upon the business of giving pleasure. The greater acts of reverent and respectful love, are often regarded as matters of course, and as such produce little impression; but the lesser acts of attention, which come not into the usual routine of conjugal duties, and into the every day offices, which may be calculated upon with almost as much certainty as the coming of the hour which they are to occupy, these free-will offerings of an inventive and active regard, these extra tokens of respect, and expressions of regard, have a mighty power to attach a husband to his wife; they are the cords of love, the bands of a man. In all her personal and domestic habits, her first care then, next to that of pleasing God, must be to please him, and thus hold to herself that heart, which cannot wander from her without carrying her happiness with it, and which, when once departed, cannot be restored by any power short of omnipotence itself.

3. MEENESS is especially mentioned by the apostle Peter, as a disposition which it is the duty of every wife to cultivate.

He has distinguished and honored this temper by calling it the *ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit. If there be some virtues, which seem pre-eminently to suit the female character, meekness bears a high place amongst such. No one stands in greater need of this disposition, than the female head of a family: either the petulance and waywardness of children, or the neglects and misconduct of servants, or the sharp words of a husband, are almost sure, if she be easily provoked, to keep her in a state of irritation all the day long. How trying is a peevish woman, how odious a brawling one. "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman." The graces were females, says Mr. Jay, so were the furies too. The influence which meekness has sometimes had in a family is astonishing: it has quenched sparks, and even coals of anger and strife, which, but for this, would have set the house on fire: it has mastered the tiger and the lion, and led them captive with the silken thread of love. The strength of woman lies not in resisting, but yielding; her power is in her gentleness; there is more of real defence, aye, and more of that aggressive operation too, which disarms a foe, in one mild look, or one soft accent, than in hours of flashing glances, and of angry tones. When, amidst domestic strife, she has been enabled to keep her temper, the storm has been often scattered as it rose; or her meekness has served as a conductor to carry off its dreadful flashes, which otherwise would have destroyed the dwelling.

Put on, then, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Pay less attention to the decoration of the person, more to that of the mind. "Your adorning is not to be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart which is not corruptible." The language of another apostle on this subject is no less striking. "In like manner also, I will that women adorn themselves in *modest* apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not



with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. Two apostles, who both wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, in such language as this, have denounced as improper, and as unbecoming a profession of godliness, a taste for immodest, expensive, or decorative dress. Surely then, this subject is worthy the most serious attention of all Christian females. By what sophistry can the letter, much more the spirit, of two passages of holy writ, so very plain and express in their terms as these, be set aside? That they *are* set aside, is evident by the appearance of almost every congregation into which we could enter on the Sabbath day, whether within or without the establishment. The race of folly, one should really suppose, is at length almost run, for it does seem well nigh impossible, even by the aid of our neighbors, the French, for the women of our age to render themselves more supremely ridiculous than many of them have lately appeared. What with the gaudiness of coloring and extravagance of form, our religious assemblies present every thing at once to disgust our taste, and to distress our piety. It is high time for the Christian teacher to call back the women "professing godliness," from their wanderings in the regions of fashionable folly, to the holy Scriptures; for the holy Scriptures, it should be remembered, have laid down a law for regulating the dress of the body, as well as that of the mind. I do hold then, that these passages of Scripture are still parts of revelation, and as such still binding upon the conscience: if not, show me when they were cancelled. I contend, that *Christian* females ought to abstain from expensive, showy, and extravagant fashions in dress, jewelry, and all kinds of personal decoration. I am not arguing for a sectarian costume, for a religious uniform, for canonical shapes and colors; nothing of the sort, but for simplicity, neatness, economy; for, what the apostle calls modest apparel, shamefacedness, and sobriety; for the *spirit* of the passages, if not the very *letter*; for a distinction between those who profess godliness, in their comparative inattention to such things, and those who make no such profession: for a proof that *their* minds are not so much engaged on these matters, as the minds of the people of the world are. I am not for extinguishing taste; alas, in matters of dress, this is already done, but for resisting the lawless dominion of folly, under the name of fashion. I am not for calling back the age of Gothic barbarism, or vulgarity: no; I will leave ample room for the cultivation of both taste and genius, in every lawful department, but I am protesting against the desolating reign of vanity; I am resisting the entrance of frivolity into the church of God; I am contending against the glaring inconsistency of rendering our religious assemblies, like the audience convened in a theatre. The evils of an improper attention to dress are great and numerous. 1. Much precious time is wasted in the study, and arrangements, and decisions of this matter. 2. The attention is taken off from the improvement of the mind and the heart, to the decoration of the person. 3. The mind is filled with pride and vanity, and a deteriorating influence is carried on upon what constitutes the true dignity of the soul. 4. The love of display infects the character. 5. Money is wasted which is wanted for relieving the misery, and improving the condition of mankind. 6. Examples are set to the lower classes, in whom the propensity is often mischievous in many ways.

We have run

Through ev'ry change that fancy at the loom,  
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;

And, studious of mutation still, discard  
A real elegance, a little us'd,  
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.  
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys  
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,  
And keeps our larger lean; puts out our fires;  
And introduces hunger, frost and woe,  
Where peace and hospitality might reign.

I am aware it might be, and is said, that there may be the pride of singularity, as well as of fashion; the pride of being covered with sober autumnal tints, as well as of exhibiting the brilliant hues of the rainbow; the pride of quality and of texture, as well as of color and of form. I know it, and I do not justify the one more than I do the other; I condemn all kinds; but at any rate there is a little more dignity in one kind, than in another. I will leave opportunity for the distinctions of rank, for the inventions of true taste, and for the modest and unobtrusive displays of natural elegance and simple beauty; but I cannot allow the propriety of Christian females yielding themselves to the guidance of fashion, however expensive, extravagant, or gaudy.

As to the employment of our artisans by the various changes of fashion; I have nothing to do with this, in face of an apostolic injunction. The silversmiths who made shrines for the worshippers of Diana, might have pleaded the same objection against the preachers of the gospel, who certainly did, so far as they were successful, ruin this trade. I am only speaking to professors of religion, who form so small a portion of society, that *their* abstinence from folly would do but little in diminishing the employment of the work-people; and if it did, let them make it up in some other way. What I contend for, then, is not meanness, not ugliness, not unvarying sameness; no; but neatness opposed to gaudiness; simplicity and becomingness opposed to extravagance; modesty opposed to indelicacy; economy opposed to expensiveness. Whether what I contend for is characteristic of the age in which we live, let any spectator determine. I am anxious to see professors of religion displaying a seriousness and spirituality, a dignity and sobriety of mind, a simplicity of habits, and a sedateness of manners, becoming their high and holy profession; and all this, united with an economy in their personal expenses, which will leave them a greater fund at their disposal, for relieving the miseries, and promoting the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

But, perhaps after all, many women may plead that the gaiety and expensiveness of their dress, is more to please their husbands than themselves: but even this must have its limits. And I really pity the folly of that man, who concerns himself in the arrangement of his wife's wardrobe and toilette; and who would rather see her go forth in all the gorgeousness of splendid apparel, to display herself in the drawing rooms of her friends, than in dignified meekness, to visit the cottages of the poor, as the messenger of mercy: and who rejoices more to contemplate her moving through the circles of fashion, the admiration of one sex, and the envy of the other, than to see her holding on her radiant course in the orbit of benevolence, clad in unexpensive simplicity, and, with the savings of her personal expenditure, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, healing the sick; and thus bringing upon herself the blessings of him that was ready to perish, and causing the widow's heart to sing for joy.

Not only the ornament, but the person which it adorns, is corruptible. Accidents may distort the finest form, diseases fade the loveliest coloring, time disfigure the smoothest surface, and death, the spoiler of beauty, work a change so awful and appalling, as to turn away the most impassioned admirers in

disgust. How soon will every other dress be displaced by the shroud, and every other decoration be stripped off to make way for the flowers that are strewed in the coffin upon the corpse, as if to hide the deformity of death. But the graces of the heart, and the beauties of the character, are imperishable; such let a wife be continually seeking to put on; "for she that has a wise husband, must entice him to an eternal dearness, by the veil of modesty, and the robes of chastity, the ornaments of meekness, and the jewels of faith and charity; she must have no paint but blushings; her brightness must be her purity, and she must shine round about with sweetness and friendship, and then she shall be pleasant while she lives, and desired when she dies."

5. *Economy and Order* in the management of her personal and domestic expenditure, is the obvious duty of a wife.

You are to preside in the direction of household affairs; and much of the prosperity and comfort of the little community, will depend upon your skilful and prudent arrangements. There is a manifest disposition in this age, in all classes of society, to come as close as possible to the habits of those above them. The poor are imitating the middling classes, and they are copying the upper ranks. A showy, luxurious, and expensive taste is almost universally cherished, and is displayed, in innumerable instances, where there are no means to support it. A large house, a country residence, splendid furniture, a carriage, a retinue of servants, and large parties, are the aim of many, whose creditors pay for all.—Christian families are in most imminent peril of worldly conformity in the present day; and the line of demarcation between the church and the world is fast wearing out. It is true they have no cards, they do not frequent the theatre, or the ball room, and *perhaps* they have no midnight routs;—but this is all: for many are as anxious about the splendor of their furniture, the fashion of their habits, the expensiveness of their entertainments, as the veriest worldling can be. Now a wife has great influence in checking or promoting all this. It has been thought that this increasing disposition for domestic show and gaiety, is to be attributed chiefly to female vanity. It is woman that is generally regarded as the presiding genius of such a scene: *she* receives the praise and the compliment of the whole, and *she* therefore is under the strongest temptation to promote it. But let her consider, how little all this has to do with the happiness of the family, even in its most prosperous state; and how a recollection of it aggravates the misery of adversity when a reverse takes place. *Then* to be found in debt for finery of dress, or furniture; *then* to have it said that *her* extravagance helped to ruin her husband; *then* to want that, for bread, which was formerly wasted on luxury; *then* to hear the whispered reproach of having injured others by her own thoughtless expenditure!—Avoid, my female friends, these miseries: do not go on to prepare wormwood and gall to embitter still more the already bitter cup of adversity. Endeavor to acquire a skilfulness in domestic management, a frugality, a prudence, a love of order and neatness, a mid-way course between meanness and luxury, a suitableness to your station in life, to your Christian profession; an economy which shall leave you more to spare for the cause of God, and the miseries of man. Rather check than stimulate the taste of your husband for expense; tell him that it is not necessary for *your* happiness, nor for the comfort of the family; draw him away from these adventitious circumstances, to the mental improvement, the moral culture, the religious instruction of your children. Let knowledge, piety, good sense, well-formed habits, harmony, mutual love, be the sources of your domestic pleasures: what is

splendor of furniture, or dress, or entertainments, to these?

6. A wife SHOULD BE MOST ATTENTIVE TO ALL THAT CONCERNS THE WELFARE AND COMFORT OF THE CHILDREN, if there be any.

For this purpose, she must be a *keeper at home*.—"That they may teach the young wives to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, *keepers at home*." And how can the duties that devolve upon the female head of a family, be well discharged if she be not a keeper at home? On this I have dwelt already in a former chapter, but its importance will justify my returning to the subject again. How much has she to attend to, how many cares to sustain, how many activities to support, where there is a young family? Whoever has leisure for gossiping, *she* has none: whoever may be found wandering from house to house, "hearing or telling some new thing," *she* must not. A mother's place is in the midst of her family; a mother's duties are to take care of *them*. Nothing can excuse a neglect of these: and yet we often see such neglect. Some are *literary characters*, and the welfare of the household is neglected for books. Not that I would debar a female from the luxury of reading, nor sink her to a mere domestic drudge, whose ceaseless toils must have no intermission, or solace from literature; far from it: but her taste for literature must be kept within due bounds, and not be allowed to interfere with her household duties. No husband can be pleased to see a book in the hands of a wife, while the house is in confusion, and the children's comfort unprovided for. Much less should a *taste for company* be allowed to draw a wife too much out of the circle of her cares and duties. To be wandering from house to house in the morning, or to be engaged till a late hour, evening after evening, at a party, while the family at home are left to themselves, or to the care of servants, is certainly disgraceful. Even attention to the *public* duties of *religion* must be regulated by a due regard to domestic claims. I am aware that many are apt to make these claims an excuse for neglecting the public means of grace almost entirely: the house of God is unfrequented; sermons, sacramental seasons, and all other religious meetings, are given up, for an absorbing attention to household affairs. This is one extreme; and the other is, such a devotedness to religious meetings, that the wants of a sick family, the cries of a hungry infant, or the circumstances of some extraordinary case of family care, are not allowed to have any force in detaining a mother from a week-day sermon, a prayer meeting, or the anniversary of some public institution. It is no honor to religion, for a wife, under such circumstances, to be seen in the house of God: duties cannot be in opposition to each other; and at such a time, her's lie at home. It must be always distressing, and in some cases disgusting, for a husband on his returning to a scene of domestic confusion, and seeing a neglected child in the cot, to be told upon inquiring after the mother, that she is attending a sermon, or a public meeting. There is great need for watchfulness in the present age, when female agency is in such requisition, lest attention to public institutions should most injuriously interfere with the duties of a wife and a mother. I know very well, that an active woman may, by habits of order, punctuality, and despatch, so arrange her more direct and immediate duties at home, as to allow of sufficient leisure to assist the noble societies which solicit her patronage, without neglecting her husband and children: but where this cannot be done, no society whether humane or religious, should be allowed to take her away from what is, after all, her first and more appropriate sphere. *She must be*



a keeper at home, if any thing there demands her presence.

Such appear to me to be the leading duties of a wife. Motives of a very high and sacred character may be offered for a diligent performance of them. *Her own comfort*, and that of her husband, is, of course, most vitally connected with a fulfilment of her obligations: and the welfare of her children is also deeply involved. And then, her *character* shines forth with peculiar lustre. A *GOOD WIFE* is a high attainment in female excellence: it is woman in her brightest glory since the fall. But there is one consideration of supreme importance mentioned by the apostle, to which I shall direct your attention. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." Powerful and yet tender consideration! Mark, my female friends, the implied eulogy passed by the apostle on *your sex*, where he seems to take it for granted, that if one party be destitute of religion, it is the husband. And facts prove that this assumption was correct. Religion flourishes most amongst the female part of our species: in our congregations, and in our churches, the greater number is of *them*.—Can we account for this by natural causes? Parly. They are more at home, and therefore more within reach of the means of grace; they are more susceptible: they are less exposed to those temptations that harden the heart through the deceitfulness of sin; they are subject to more affliction, which softens the heart, and prepares it for the seed of the kingdom: but all this is not enough, for without grace, all these advantages are unavailing; we must resolve it therefore into divine purpose, divine interposition, and the arrangements of divine wisdom. Female influence in all civilized states is great: and God has generally made much use of this wherever the gospel has come, as one of the means for spreading religion. He pours his grace on *them*, that their influence may be employed with others, especially their husbands and their children. If then, in any case, a Christian woman be united to an unconverted man, she must cherish and display a deep, and tender, and judicious solicitude for his salvation; and "what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband." I would not encourage unequal marriages; I would not have the single try the doubtful and dangerous experiment, of marrying an irreligious man, in the hope of converting him; in such cases, the conversion is often the other way; but where the union is formed, there I say, nourish the anxiety, and employ every discreet exertion for his eternal welfare. Many instances have occurred, in which the unbelieving husband, has been sanctified by the wife. She has drawn him with the cords of a tender and judicious love, to a consideration of the subject of personal religion. Think of the value of a soul, and of the ineffable glory of being the instrument of its salvation. But O! to be the means of saving the soul of a husband! Think how it will strengthen the bond, and sanctify and sweeten it, which unites you on earth and in time; and at the same time add to it a tie, by which you shall "not lose one another in the valley of the shadow of death," but be reunited as kindred spirits, though not as man and wife, in heaven, and through eternity. Think, O wife, of the happiness—the honor that awaits you. What is the triumph you have acquired over him by your charms, compared with the victory you will obtain over him by your religion? What pleasure will attend you the remainder of your days—now you are of "one heart and one mind:" now you "take sweet counsel together." The privileged

language of prayer now is—"OUR FATHER:"—of every motion made to go and seek the Lord of hosts there is a ready acceptance—"I will go also." And what will be your joy and crown of rejoicing in that day, when, before assembled men and angels, he will say, O blessed be the Providence which attached us in yonder world, and has still more perfectly united us in this. The woman thou gavest to be with me, led me not to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but to the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.\*

But how is this solicitude to be employed? The apostle tells us: "that they may be won by the conversation of their wives, while they BEHOLD your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." Your religion must be seen embodied in your whole character and conduct. It must commend itself to their judgment, by what they perceive, as sincere. It must be *consistent*; for a want of uniformity, however earnest it may in many respects and at many times appear, will produce disgust. You must "let your light shine before them, that they *seeing* your good works, may glorify God." You must ever appear invested with all the beauty of a lovely example, which, silent though you be as it respects your tongue, is living eloquence. Your religion must diffuse its lustre over your whole character, and impress itself most deeply on your relation as a wife, and a mother: it must be a new motive to all that respect, and reverence, and devotedness, and meekness, which have been laid before you, and it must lead you to carry every conjugal and maternal virtue to the highest degree of perfection. It must be attended with the most profound humility, for if there be any spiritual pride, any conscious and manifest sense of superiority, any thing approaching to the pharisaic temper, which says, "Stand by, I am holier than thou," any thing like contempt of your husband, as an unconverted sinner, you will excite an inveterate prejudice, not only against religion, but against yourself; religion will be hated by him for your sake, and you for religion's sake. When you venture to speak to him on the subject of piety, it should be as remotely as possible from all lecturing, all dictation, all reproach, all conscious superiority; and with all possible tenderness, meekness, humility, and persuasive affection. Never talk to him of his state *before others*, and never talk *at him*. Nor is it likely to accomplish the object you have in view, to weary him by continual importunity. Many defeat their own end, by an incessant introduction of the subject, and sometimes with an asperity which increases the revulsion, which its own nature is calculated, in such a mind, to produce. An occasional hint, and that of the most tender, respectful, and delicate kind, is all that you should attempt, and then leave your example to speak. Occasionally, you may put an instructive volume in his way, and solicit his perusal of it. Do not bring your religious friends too much about you, so as to annoy him; especially, keep away as much as possible, any that may have a less portion of discretion than the rest; and confine yourself to the more judicious and best informed.—Never rudely interfere with his pursuits, his reading, or his company, although they may not be what *you* can cordially approve. Till he is enlightened from above, he will not see the evil of these things, and to attempt to interrupt him, in any other way, than by the mildest and most respectful expostulation, will only do harm. Should he wish to draw you from the high pursuit of eternal life, you are not, of course, in this case, to yield to his persuasion, nor in any thing to concede, where your conscience is decidedly concerned in the matter. You

\* Mr. Jay.

must be firm, but mild. One concession granted by you, would only lead to another. But still, even in this extremity, your resistance of his attempts to interfere with your religion, must be maintained in all the meekness of wisdom, and must be attended with fresh efforts to please, in all things which are lawful. If such a line of conduct should subject you to reproach, anger, and persecution, a most painful and by no means an uncommon case, you must possess your soul in patience, and commit your way to Him that judgeth righteously. Many a persecuting husband, has been subdued, if not to religion, yet to kinder conduct, by the meek and uncomplaining temper of his wife.

To conclude. Let us all seek after more of the spirit of true religion—the spirit of faith, of hope, of prayer: a faith, that really believes the word of God, and looketh habitually to the cross of Christ by which we obtain salvation, and to the eternal world where we shall fully and for ever enjoy it: a hope that lives in the expectation and desire of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life: and a spirit of prayer which leads us daily and hourly to the throne of divine grace, for all that aid of the Holy Ghost, which we need, not only for the duties that refer to our relations to another world, but for those which devolve upon us, in consequence of our relation in this. “Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.” The same principle of divine grace which unites us to God, will bind us closer to each other. Religion contains in it, not only the seeds of immortal virtues, but of such as are mortal: not only the germs of excellences which are to flourish in the temple of heaven, but which grow up in the house of our pilgrimage upon earth, to enliven with their beauty, and to refresh with their fragrance, the domestic circle. A good Christian cannot be a bad husband, or father: and, other things being equal, he who has most piety, will shine most in all the relations of life. A Bible placed between man and wife as the basis of their union, the rule of their conduct, and the model of their spirit, will make up many a difference, comfort them under many a cross, guide them in many a strait, wherein flesh and blood will be confounded and at a loss, support them in their last sad parting from each other, and re-unite them in the world where they shall go no more out.

“Those married pairs that live, as remembering that they must part again, and give an account how they treat themselves and each other, shall at the day of their death, be admitted to glorious espousals; and when they shall live again, be married to their Lord, and partake of his glories. All those things that now please us, shall pass from us, or we from them; but those things that concern the other life, are permanent as the numbers of eternity: and although at the resurrection, there shall be no relation of husband and wife, and no marriage shall be celebrated but the marriage of the Lamb, yet then shall be remembered how men and women passed through this state, which is a type of that; and from this sacramental union, all holy pairs shall pass to the spiritual and eternal, where love shall be their portion, and joys shall crown their heads, and they shall lie in the bosom of Jesus, and in the heart of God to eternal ages.” Amen.

### CHAPTER III.

#### SOME REMARKS ON THE FORMATION OF THE MARRIAGE UNION.

“Methinks it is a misfortune that the marriage state, which, in its own nature, is adapted to give us the

completest happiness this life is capable of, should be so uncomfortable a one to so many as it daily proves. But the mischief generally proceeds from the unwise choice people make for themselves, and an expectation of happiness from things incapable of giving it. Nothing but the good qualities of the person beloved, can be a foundation for a love of judgment and discretion; and whoever expect happiness from any thing but virtue, wisdom, good humor, and a similitude of manners, will find themselves widely mistaken.”—SPECTATOR.

THE preceding chapters make it evident, that marriage is a step of incalculable importance, and ought never to be taken without the greatest consideration and the utmost caution. If the duties of this state are so numerous and so weighty, and if the right discharge of these obligations, as well as the happiness of our whole life, and even our safety for eternity, depend, as they necessarily must do, in no small measure, upon the choice we make of a husband or wife, then let reason determine, with what deliberation we should advance to such a connection. It is obvious, that no decision of our whole earthly existence requires more of the exercise of a calm judgment than this; and yet observation proves how rarely the judgment is allowed to give counsel, and how generally the imagination and the passions settle the business. A very great portion of the misery and of the crime with which society is deprived and afflicted, is the result of ill-formed marriages. If mere passion without prudence, or covetousness without love, be allowed to guide the choice, no wonder that it is improperly done, or that it is highly disastrous in its consequences; and how often are passion and covetousness alone consulted. To use the beautiful language quoted by me in another work, where I have treated briefly the subject of this chapter, I would remark, “that they who enter the marriage state, cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to, from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, which her own folly hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes, but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neighbors, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply.” If, however, it were merely the comfort of the married pair themselves that was concerned, it would be a matter of less consequence, a stake of less value; but the well being of a family, not only for this world, but for the next; and equally so the well being of *their* descendants, even to a remote period, depends upon this union. In the ardor of passion, few are disposed to listen to the counsels of prudence; and perhaps there is no advice, generally speaking, more thrown away, than that which is offered on the subject of marriage. Most persons, especially if they are already attached to a selected object, even though they have not committed themselves by a promise or even a declaration, will go on in the pursuit, blinded by love to the indiscretion of their choice; or desperately determined, with the knowledge of that indiscretion, to accomplish, if possible, their purpose. Upon such individuals, reasoning is wasted, and they must be left to gain wisdom in the only way by which some will acquire it, painful experience. To others who may be yet



disengaged, and disposed to hearken to the language of advice, the following remarks are offered.

In the affair of marriage, *BE GUIDED BY THE ADVICE OF PARENTS, OR GUARDIANS.* Parents have no right to select for you, nor ought you to select for yourself, without consulting with them. How far they are vested with authority to prohibit you from marrying a person whom they disapprove, is a point of casuistry, very difficult to determine. If you are of age, and able to provide for yourselves, or are likely to be well provided for by those to whom you are about to be united, it is a question whether they can do any thing more than advise and persuade; but *till you are of age*, they have positive authority to forbid; and it is an undutiful act in you to form connections without their knowledge, and to carry them on against their prohibitions. Their objections ought always, I admit, to be founded on reason, and not on caprice, pride, or cupidity: for where this is the case, and children are of full age, and are guided in their choice by prudence, by piety, and by affection, they certainly may and must be left to decide for themselves. Where, however, parents rest their objections on sufficient grounds, and show plain and palpable reasons for prohibiting a connection, there it is the manifest duty of sons, and especially of daughters, to give it up. A union formed in opposition to the reasonable objection of a discreet father or mother, is very rarely a happy one; and the bitter cup is rendered additionally bitter in such a case, by the wormwood and gall of self-reproach. What miseries of this kind have we all seen! How many beacons are set up, if young people would but look at them, to warn them against the folly of giving themselves to the impulse of an imprudent attachment, and following it to a close, against the advice, remonstrances, and prohibitions of their parents. Very seldom does that connection prove otherwise than a source of wretchedness, on which the frown of an affectionate and wise father and mother fell from the beginning; for God seems to rise up in judgment, and to support the parent's authority, by confirming their displeasure with his own.

Marriage should in every case be formed UPON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL ATTACHMENT. If there be no love *before* marriage, it cannot be expected there should be any after it. Lovers, as all are supposed to be who are looking forward to this union, without love, have no right to expect happiness; the coldness of indifference is soon likely, in their case, to be changed into aversion. There ought to be *personal* attachment. If there be any thing, even in the exterior, that excites disgust, the bans are forbidden by the voice of nature. I do not say, that beauty of countenance, or elegance of form, is necessary; by no means; a pure and strong attachment has often existed in the absence of these; and I will not take upon me to determine, that it is absolutely impossible to love deformity; but we certainly ought not to unite ourselves with it, unless we can love it; or, at least, are so enamored with the fascination of mental qualities that may be united with it, as to lose sight of the body in the charms of the mind, the heart, and the manners. All I contend for is, that to proceed to marriage against absolute dislike and revulsion, is irrational, base, and sinful.

But love should respect the *mind*, as well as the body: for to be attached to an individual simply on the ground of beauty, is to fall in love with a doll, a statue, or a picture; such an attachment is lust or fancy, but certainly not a rational affection. If we love the body, but do not love the mind, the heart, and the manners, our regard is placed upon the inferior part of the person, and therefore, only upon that which by disease, may be next year a very dif-

ferent thing to what it is now. Nothing fades so soon as beauty; it is but like the delicate bloom of an attractive fruit, and if there be nothing agreeable underneath, will be thrown away in disgust when that is brushed off; and thrown away, too, by the very hand of him that plucks it. It is so commonly remarked, as to be proverbial, that the charms of mind increase by acquaintance, while those of the exterior diminish: and that while the former easily reconcile us to a plain countenance, the latter excite, by the power of contrast, a distaste for the insipidity, ignorance, and heartlessness with which they are united, like gaudy, scentless flowers growing in a desert. Instead of determining to stake our happiness upon the act of gathering these blooming weeds to place them in our bosom, let us ask, how they will look a few years hence, or how they will adorn and bless our habitation? Let us ask, will the understanding, united with that countenance, render its subject fit to be my companion, and the instructor of my children? Will that temper patiently bear with my weaknesses, kindly consult my tastes, affectionately study my comfort?—Will those manners please me in solitude, as well as in society? Will those habits render my dwelling pleasant to myself and to my friends? We must try *these* matters, and hold our passions back, that we may take counsel with our judgment, and suffer reason to come down and talk with us in the cool of the evening.

Such then, is the love on which marriage should be contracted: love to the whole person; love to the mind, and heart, and manners, as well as to the countenance and form; love tempered with respect; for this only is the attachment that is likely to survive the charms of novelty, the spoiliations of disease, and the influence of time; that is likely to support the tender sympathies and exquisite sensibilities of the conjugal state; and render man and wife to the verge of extreme old age, what it was the intention of him, who instituted the marriage union, they should be,—the help and the comfort of each other.

By what language then, sufficiently strong and indignant, can we reprobate those compacts, so disgraceful, and yet so common, by which marriage is converted into a *money speculation, a trading enterprise, a mere business of pounds, shillings, and pence*? How cruel a part do those parents act, who, for the sake of an advantageous settlement, urge their daughters into a union, from which their hearts revolt; or persuade their sons to marry women, towards whom they feel no affection, merely for the sake of a fortune! Unnatural fathers and mothers! is it thus ye would lead your children, decorated as sacrifices, to the shrine of Mammon, and act the part of priests and priestesses *yourselves*, in the immolation of these hapless victims!! What, will *you* assist in the rites of this legal prostitution? Can none others be found but *you*, the natural guardians of your children's interest, to persuade them to sell their persons, and barter all the happiness of their future lives for gold? Will *you* make yourselves responsible for all the future miseries of your children, and your children's children, by recommending such a sordid compact? Forbear, I entreat you, for your own sake, for your children's sake, and for the sake of society, to recommend a marriage, which is not founded on pure, and strong, and mutual attachment.

Young people themselves, should be extremely careful on their own part, to let no persuasions of others, no impulse of their own covetousness, no anxiety to be their own masters and mistresses, no ambition for secular splendor, induce them to enter into a connection, to which they are not drawn by the solicitations of a pure and virtuous love. What

will a large house, splendid furniture, a gay equipage, and fashionable entertainments do for their possessor, in the absence of connubial love? "Is it for these baubles, these toys," exclaims the wretched heart as it awakens, alas! too late, in some sad scene of domestic woe, "is it for this I have bartered away myself, my happiness, my honor?"

"How ill the scenes that offer rest,  
And heart that cannot rest agree."

O there is a sweetness, a charm, a power to please, in pure and mutual affection, though it be cherished in the humblest abode, and maintained amidst the plainest circumstances, and has to contend with many difficulties, compared with which, the elegancies and brilliancies of worldly grandeur, are but as the splendor of an eastern palace, to one of the bowers of the garden of Eden. Let the man nobly determine to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, and find his daily task sweetened by the thought that it is for the woman he loves, rather than roll about in his chariot, and live a life of splendid indolence and misery, with the woman he does *not* love: and let the other sex, as nobly and heroically determine to trust to their own energies, but especially to a gracious providence, rather than marry without affection, for the sake of a settlement.

Then there is another error committed by some: having been disappointed in a connection which they hoped to form, they become reckless for the future, and in a temper of mind bordering upon revenge, accept the first individual who may present himself, whether they love him or not. This is the last degree of folly, and is such an act of suicidal violence upon her own peace, as can neither be described nor reprobated in terms sufficiently strong. This is to act like the enraged scorpion, and to turn their sting upon themselves; and in an act of spleen to sacrifice their happiness to folly. And in fact, on whom does this mad spite fall? Upon the individual who has done them no harm, but that of attempting to heal the breach that has been made in their happiness, and to whom in return they carry a heart, which they have virtually given to another. How much more rational, how much more conducive to their own comfort, and how much more honorable is it in a case like this, to wait till time, and piety have healed the wound, and left the heart at liberty for another attachment; and even to remain in perpetual celibacy rather than marry without that which alone can constitute a virtuous marriage,—sincere affection.

Marriage should ever be contracted, WITH THE STRICTEST REGARD TO THE RULES OF PRUDENCE. Discretion is a virtue, at which none but fools laugh.—In reference to no subject is it more frequently set aside and despised, than in that, which, of all that can be mentioned, most needs its sober counsels.—For love to be seen standing at the oracle of wisdom, is thought by some romantic and silly young people, to be a thing altogether out of place. If *they* only were concerned, they might be left to their folly, to be punished by its fruits; but imprudent marriages, as we have already considered, spread far and wide their bad consequences, and also send these consequences down to posterity. The understanding is given to us to control the passions and the imagination; and they, who, in an affair of such consequence, as choosing a companion for life, set aside the testimony of the former, and listen only to the advice of the latter, have, in that instance, at least, forfeited the character of a rational being, and sunk to the level of those creatures, who are wholly governed by appetite, unchecked by reason. Prudence would prevent, if it were allowed to guide

the conduct of mankind, a very large portion of human misery. In the business before us, it would allow none to marry till they had a prospect of support. It is perfectly obvious to me, that the present generation of young people are not distinguished by a discretion of this kind: they are too much in haste to enter the conjugal state, and place themselves at the heads of families, before they have any rational hope of being able to support them. As soon almost as they arrive at the age of manhood, whether they are in business or not, before they have ascertained whether their business will succeed or not, they look round for a wife, and make a hasty, perhaps an injudicious selection. A family comes on before they have adequate means of maintaining it; their affairs become embarrassed; bankruptcy ensues; their prospects are clouded for ever; they become burdens upon their friends; and their misery, together with that of the partner of their folly, and of their hapless children, is sealed for the term of their existence upon earth. How many instances of this kind have we known, and which may be considered as sad, and true, and impressive comments on the imprudence of improvident marriages. Let young people exercise their reason and their foresight; or if they will not, but are determined to rush into the expenses of housekeeping, before they have opened sources to meet them, let them hear, in spite of the syren song of their imagination, the voice of faithful warning, and prepare to eat the bitter herbs of useless regrets, for many a long and weary year after the nuptial feast has passed away.

Prudence forbids all *unequal* marriages. There should be an equality, as near as may be in age; "for," says Mr. Jay, "how unnatural, how indecent, is it to see an old man surrounded with infants and babes, when he can scarcely see or hear for the infirmities of age! How unnatural, how odious is it, to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity, so as to perplex strangers to determine, whether he is living with a wife or a mother." No one will give the woman in the one case, or the man in the other, the credit of marrying for love; and the world will be ill-natured enough, and one can hardly help joining in the censoriousness, to say that such matches are mere pecuniary speculations; for generally speaking, the old party in the union, is a rich one; and as generally, they carry a scourge for the other in their purse. A fortune has often thus been a misfortune for both.

Equality of RANK is desirable, or as near to it as possible. Instances have occurred, in which respectable men have married servants, and yet maintained their respectability, and enjoyed a full cup of domestic comfort: but these cases are rare, and generally contain some circumstances of peculiarity. And it is much less perilous for a rich man to descend into the vale of poverty for a wife, than it is for a rich woman to go down for a husband. *He* can much more easily raise his companion to his own level, than *she* can. Society will much more readily accommodate themselves to his error, than to hers. Much of the happiness of the conjugal state, depends upon the relatives of the parties, and if the marriage has offended them, if it has degraded them, how much of bitterness is it in their power to throw into the cup of enjoyment. Many a wife has carried to her grave, the sting inflicted upon her peace, by the insults of her husband's friends; and in all such cases, *he* must receive a part of the venom.

"It has been said, that no class of men err so much in this article, as ministers. But surely this cannot be admitted. It cannot be supposed that those whose office it is to inculcate prudence, should themselves be powerful for indiscretion. It cannot be supposed that those whose incomes are li-



mixed, and whose circumstances demand economy, would bring into the management of them, those who have been trained up in delicacy and extravagance; and are helpless and profuse. It cannot be supposed, that men, whose office is respectable, and productive of social intercourse, would select vulgarity and ignorance, unfit to be either seen or heard, merely because it is pious. A minister is to inculcate order and regularity; and would he marry a female that would render his house a scene of confusion and tumult? A minister is to show how the claims of life and religion harmonize, and to assign to the duties of each, their own place and season; and would he marry a rattle-brain, who instead of being a keeper at home, has been always rambling after some new preacher; who, instead of quietly glorifying God in her own sphere of action, has been endeavoring to excite public attention; who has been zealous in matters of doubtful disputation, but has treated as beneath her regard, matters of common and relative obligations? Need he be told, that a becoming behavior in a lower and private station, is the surest pledge of, and the best preparation for, a proper behavior in a higher and more public situation? A minister is to recommend neatness, and all the decencies of life, and would he marry a slattern? A minister is to show, that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is in the sight of God, of great price, and would he marry a scold? A minister is to stand in the same relation to all his people, who demand his love and service, and would he marry a female who would fondly attach herself to a few cronies, listen to all their secrets and divulge *her own*, and form cabals and schisms, which will render his residence unpleasant, or occasion his removal?

To my brethren in the ministry I do recommend, and recommend with an earnestness which I have no language sufficiently emphatic to express, the greatest caution in this most delicate and important affair. In their case, the effects of an imprudent marriage are felt in the church of the living God. If the wives of the deacons, are to be "grave, no slanderers, sober, faithful, in all things," what less can be required of the wives of the pastors? "A bishop must be blameless, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God." But how can he exhibit in his domestic constitution, the beautiful order and harmony which should prevail in every Christian family, and especially in every *minister's* house, without the intelligent and industrious co-operation of his wife: and now can this be expected of one who *has* no intelligence, or industry? Not only much of the comfort, but of the *character* of a minister, DEPENDS UPON HIS WIFE; and what is of still greater consequence, much of his usefulness. How many have been driven away from scenes of successful labor, or rendered uncomfortable in the midst of them, by the mismanagement of wives, who have plunged their husbands into debt, and thus blasted their respectability; or by that pride, petulance, vulgarity, meanness, and busy interference, by which they have involved them in perpetual strife, with their neighbors, tradesmen, or their congregation! considering, therefore, how much mischief may be done by *their* indiscretion, ministers should raise imprudence in marriage to the rank of a great sin. And then their guilt in the commission of this sin is the greater as they have less excuse for it than others; for they have only to exercise patience, and to restrain themselves from hasty and injudicious entanglements, and to avail themselves of the extended opportunity which their situation gives them, to obtain a companion, that shall be to them, both as men and mi-

nisters, a helper of their joy. Some widowers in selecting a second wife have consulted their children's comfort more than their own taste; whether this be right or wrong in their case, we shall presently consider; but certainly, a minister while he is allowed the usual privilege of following his own predilections, ought never to gratify his taste at the expense of his official respectability, or at the risk of his usefulness, but in the choice of a wife, should be guided by a view to the comfort of his church, as well as by a reference to his own happiness.

Marriage should always be formed, WITH A DUE REGARD TO THE DICTATES OF RELIGION. A pious person should not marry any one who is not also pious. It is not desirable to be united to an individual even of a different denomination, and who, as a point of conscience, attends her own place of worship. It is not pleasant on a Sabbath morning to separate, and go one to one place of worship, and the other to another. The most delightful walk that a holy couple can take, is to the house of God in company, and when, in reference to the high themes of redemption and the invisible realities of eternity, they take sweet counsel together. No one would willingly lose this. But oh to walk separately in a still more important and dreadful sense! To part at the point where the two roads to eternity branch off, the one to heaven, the other to hell; and for the believer "to travel on to glory," with the dreadful consciousness, that the other party is journeying to perdition!! This is indeed dreadful, and is of itself sufficient to occasion no small diminution of conjugal felicity. If however, the *comfort* of the parties only were concerned, it would be a matter of less consequence: but it is a matter of *conscience*, and an affair in which we have no option. "She is at liberty to marry whom she will," says the apostle, speaking to the case of a widow, "but only in the Lord." Now though this was said in reference to a female, all the reasons of the law belong with equal force to the other sex.—This appears to me to be not only advice but *law*, and is as binding upon the conscience as any other law that we find in the word of God; and the incidental manner in which this injunction occurs, is, as has been very properly remarked, to the intelligent reader of Scripture, the strongest confirmation of the rule in all cases, where marriage is in prospect, and where there has been no engagement previous to conversion. As to the other passage, where the apostle commands us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, it does not apply to marriage, except by inference, but to church fellowship, or rather to association and conduct in general, in reference to which, professing Christians are not to symbolize with unbelievers. But if this be improper in regard to other matters, how much more so in that connection, which has so powerful an influence over our character, as well as our happiness. For a Christian, then, to marry an individual who is not decidedly and evidently a pious person, is a direct opposition to the word of God.

And if Scripture were not against it, reason is; for "how can two walk together, except they be agreed." A difference of taste in *minor matters* is an impediment in the way of domestic comfort; but to be opposed to each other on the all important subject of religion, is a risk, even as it respects our comfort, which no considerate person should be induced, on any consideration to incur. How can the higher ends of the domestic constitution be answered, where one of the parents has not the spiritual qualifications necessary for accomplishing them? How can the work of religious education be conducted, and the children be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? And as it respects individual and personal assistance in religious matters, do we not all want helps instead of hinderances? A Christian

should make every thing bend to religion, but allow religion to bend to nothing. This is the one thing needful, to which every thing should be subordinate; and surely, to place out of consideration, the affairs of his eternal salvation in so important an affair as marriage, shows either that the religion of a person who acts thus is but profession, or likely soon to become so.

The neglect of this plain and reasonable rule is becoming, I am afraid, more and more prevalent. I do not wonder at all, that this subject should have excited the attention of the ministers of religion, and that the Congregational Association for Wiltshire should, at their yearly meeting, in 1866, have come to the following resolution:—*"Deploping the little regard of late years paid by too many professors of religion to the Christian rule of marriage: and deeming it desirable, that the attention of the public in general, and our own churches in particular, should be called to this subject; we do unanimously request the Rev. Mr. Jay to publish some strictures upon it."*

In the excellent treatise which Mr. Jay published in compliance with this request, he makes the following just and important remarks. "How deplorable is it that this Christian rule of marriage is so frequently trampled upon. The violation is, in the degree of it at least, peculiar to our own age. Our pious ancestors, especially among the non-conformists, would have been shocked at the practice, as appears from their invaluable writings. AND I AM PERSUADED THAT IT IS VERY MUCH OWING TO THE PREVALENCE OF THESE INDISCRIMINATE AND UNHALLOWED CONNECTIONS, THAT WE HAVE FALLEN SO FAR SHORT OF THOSE MEN OF GOD WHO ARE GONE BEFORE US, IN OUR SECLUSION FROM THE WORLD, IN THE SIMPLICITY OF OUR MANNERS, IN THE UNIFORMITY OF OUR PROFESSION, IN THE DISCHARGE OF FAMILY WORSHIP, AND IN THE TRAINING UP OF OUR HOUSEHOLDS IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD."

No one should contemplate the prospect of such a connection as marriage, without the greatest and most serious deliberation; nor without the most earnest prayer to God for direction. Prayer, however, to be acceptable to the Almighty, should be sincere, and should be presented with a real desire to know and do his will. Many, I believe, act toward the Deity, as they do towards their friends: they make up their minds, and then ask to be directed. They have some doubts, and very often strong ones, of the propriety of the step they are about to take, which are gradually dissipated by their supplications, till they have prayed themselves into a conviction that they are quite right in the decision, which they have in fact, already made. To pray for direction in an affair which we know to be in opposition to God's word, and on which we have already resolved to act, is adding hypocrisy to rebellion. If there be reason to believe that the individual who solicits a Christian to unite herself with him in marriage, is not truly pious, what need has she of praying to be directed? This seems like asking the Almighty, to be permitted to do that which he has forbidden to be done.

In the case of WIDOWS and WIDOWERS, especially where there is a family, *peculiar prudence* is necessary. I have known instances in which such persons have sacrificed all their own tastes and predilections, and have made their selection with *exclusive* reference to their children. Such a sacrifice is indeed generous; but it may become a question whether it is discreet. It is placing their own comfort, and even character, in some degree of peril, neither of which can be lost, without most serious mischief to those very children, whose interest they have so heroically consulted. This, however, is an error much more rare and venial, than that of the opposite extreme. How unseemly and inconsiderate

is it for a sexagenarian, to bring home a young wife, and place her over daughters older than herself, and introduce into the family circle, aunts and uncles, younger than some of the nephews and nieces.—Rare is the case, in which such inexpedient connections are formed, without the authors of them losing much of their own reputation, and destroying much of the comfort of their families. Let not such men wonder, if their daughters by the first marriage, are driven from their home by the consequences of the second; and are led to form imprudent matches, to which they were led by the force of parental example, and urged by the consequences of parental folly.

In the selection of a second companion for life, where the first has been eminent for talents or virtues, much care should be taken that there be no great and striking inferiority; for in such a case,

—"busy, meddling memory,  
In barbarous succession, musters up  
The past endearments of their softer hours;"

which form a contrast ever present, and ever painful. The man that never knew by experience the joy of a *happy* marriage, can never know the ills of an imprudent one, as aggravated by the power of comparison. Let him that *has* thus known them, beware how he expose himself to such helpless, hopeless misery.

Due care should also be exercised in reference to the children. Has the woman about to be selected, that principle, that prudence, that self-control, that good temper, which, if she become herself a mother, will help her to conceal her partialities, for to suppress them is impossible, and would be unnatural, and to seem no less kind to her adopted offspring, than to her own? That man acts a most cruel, a most wicked part towards the memory of his first wife, who does not provide for *her* children, a kind and judicious friend in his second. What is it but a dread of this, that has made some women, when upon their dying bed, break through the rules of propriety, and recommend their successor in the arms, and heart, and house of their husbands?—They trembled for their children, and seemed at that sad moment, to have become willing to be forgotten, provided their babes could find a second mother in her that was to fill their place. Let me then become the advocate of fatherless, or motherless children, and entreat, for the sake, both of the living and the dead, a due regard to the comfort of these orphans.

Nor should less deliberation be exercised by the party who is about to take, or invited to take the care of another person's children. Have they love enough for the parent, to bear the burden of care for his sake? Have they kindness enough, temper enough, discretion enough, for such a situation, and for such an office? There is no difficulty where the children are lovely in person, and amiable in temper; but when they have no personal attractions, no charms of mind, no endearments of character, then is the time to realize the truth of Mr. Jay's expression, "a wife *may* be supplied, a mother *cannot*." The man or the woman that can act a parent's part towards a froward and unlovely child must have more than *nature*, for this belongs only to a real parent, they *must* have principle and kindness, and *need* have grace. Let all who are invited to take the superintendence of a family, ask themselves, if they possess the requisites for the comfortable and satisfactory discharge of its duties. Let them inquire whether it is likely they can be happy in such a situation themselves; for if not, they had far better never enter it, as their unhappiness must, inevitably, fill the whole family circle with misery.

It cannot be sufficiently deplored, that all suitable



preparation for the marriage state, is usually put aside for the busy activities of vanity, which in fact, are but as dust in the balance of the conjugal destiny. Every thought, and anticipation, and anxiety, is too often absorbed in the selection of a house, and furniture; and in matters still more insignificant and frivolous. How common is it for a female to spend those hours, day after day, and week after week, in communion with her milliner, debating and discussing the subject of the color, and form, and material, in which she is to shine forth in nuptial splendor, which ought to be employed in meditating the eventful step, which is to fix for life her destiny, and that of her intended husband; as if the great object were to *appear* a gay and fashionable bride, rather than to *be* a good and happy wife.—And most pitiable is it to see some mothers, ministering to this folly, and flattering the vanity of their daughters, instead of preparing them by judicious and seasonable counsels, for discharging the duties of that new and important connection, into which they are about to enter.

"Study," said an old author, "the duties of marriage, before you enter into it. There are crosses to be borne, there are snares to be avoided, and manifold obligations to be discharged, as well as great felicity to be enjoyed. And should no *provision* be made? For want of this, result the frequent disappointments of that honorable estate. Hence that repentance which is at once *too soon*, and *too late*.—The husband knows not how to rule; and the wife knows not how to obey. Both are ignorant, both conceited, and both miserable."

IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DUTIES OF PARENTS.

"Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." EPHES. vi. 4.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." PROV. xxii. 6.

"And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." DEUT. vi. 6, 7.

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." MAT. iv. 6.

It is an interesting and important era in the history of domestic life, when the husband and wife receive the new names of father and mother, and become united by the supplemental tie, which is furnished by the little helpless stranger, so lately introduced into the family. Who that has felt them, can ever forget the emotions awakened by the first gaze upon the face of his child, by the first embrace of his babe. Little, however, do the bulk of mankind consider, what a weight of obligation, what a degree of responsibility, that child has brought into the world with him for his parents. In the joyousness with which the mother lavishes her fond embraces upon her boy, and in the paternal pride with which the father looks on this new object of their affection, how rarely does either of them revolve, in deep seriousness, the future destiny of this new idol of their hearts; or consider how nearly that destiny is connected with their own conduct. Parental obligations are neither felt nor known by multitudes. How then can they be discharged? Rushing into

the connection of marriage under the mere impulse of passion, without forethought, without prudence, multitudes become parents before they have one right view, or one right feeling, in reference to the duties of the parental relationship; to which they come with scarcely any other preparedness, than that mere animal fondness for their young, which they partake of in common with the irrational creation; but not with that same instinctive ability, "to train them up in the way they should go." Who can wonder at the disordered state of society at large, or be surprised at the aboundings of evils and miseries in our world, that looks at the manner in which domestic duties are neglected. When I consider what poor, ignorant, thoughtless, frivolous, wicked creatures are often seen at the head of households, I can only ascribe it to the interference of an all-wise and powerful providence, that society is not far more chaotic than it is.

My business in this chapter, is, to endeavor to rectify, if possible, some of these evils, and to lay down a rule to guide the parent in discharging his truly important, and awfully responsible obligation; persuaded as I am, that many of the evils and miseries of society would vanish before a right performance of parental duties.

1. It is impossible for parents to discharge their duty, without a correct view of the nature and design of the domestic constitution.

This they should study, and arrive at the conclusion as speedily as possible, and keep it ever before the mind, that the great design of this compact, is, *to form well the character of the children*; to train up the citizen for the world, and the Christian for the church; to assist the child, as a mortal, to go with honor and comfort through this life, and as an immortal, to reach life everlasting. The domestic circle is intended to be the school of character, where, in the highest sense of the term, the most important business of education is to be conducted; where the moral sense is to be implanted and cultivated, and the conscience, and the temper, and the heart, are all to be trained.

2. Parents should be most deeply impressed and affected, with a sense of the importance of the station they occupy in the domestic constitution.

Their state of mind should be the very opposite of that light and frivolous indifference; that absence of all anxiety, which many of them manifest. There are some who seem to regard their children as pretty little living playthings, that must be well taken care of, and be taught, by somebody or other, whatever will set them off to the best advantage; but as to any idea of the formation of their character, especially their moral and religious character, and any of that deep, and painful, and almost overwhelming solicitude, which arises from a clear perception, and powerful impression of the probable connection between the child's destiny, and the parents' conduct; to all this they are utter strangers. Many horticulturalists have far more intense solicitude about the developing of their plants, far more wakeful and anxious care about the fragrance and color of a flower, or the size and flavor of a fruit, than many parents have about the development of mind, and the formation of character, in a child.—They have plants of immortality in their house, they have young trees which are to bear fruits to eternity, growing up around them, the training of which is committed to their care, and yet have very little solicitude, and scarcely any thoughtfulness, whether they yield in this world or the next, poisonous or wholesome produce. On parents, it depends in a great measure what their children are to be—miserable or happy in themselves; a comfort or a curse to their connections; an ornament or a deformity to society; a fiend or a seraph in

eternity. It is indeed an awful thing to be a parent, and is enough to awaken the anxious, trembling inquiry in every heart, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things?"

3. Parents should seek after the possession of all possible qualifications for their office.

What man in his senses would undertake the office of a pilot upon a dangerous coast, without a knowledge of navigation? Or that of a general of an army, without a knowledge of military tactics? Or that of a physician, without a knowledge of medicine and diseases? And who would go on another hour in the office of a parent, without seeking to possess all suitable qualifications? And what are they?

*Genuine personal religion*: for how can they bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if they do not know the Lord for themselves? In order to teach religion with any probable effect, we must know it ourselves. That parent will have little ability, and less inclination, to inculcate piety upon his children, who has none himself. A graceless parent is a most awful character! Oh, to see the father and mother of a rising family, with a crowd of young immortals growing up around them, and teaching irreligion to their offspring, and leading them to perdition by the power of their own example. A sheep leading her twin lambs into the covert of a hungry tiger, would be a shocking sight, but to see parents by their own irreligion, or want of religion, conducting their family to the bottomless pit, is most horrible! No one, then, can rightly discharge the duties of a parent, in the higher reference of the family compact, without that personal religion, which consists in repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a life of habitual holiness. In the absence of this, the highest end of the domestic constitution *must* be neglected, the sublimest part of education must be abandoned.

Parents should seek the *entire government of their temper*; a habit of self-control; a meekness not to be disturbed by the greatest provocation; a patience not to be wearied by long continued opposition. I say to any father or mother, are you irritable, petulant? If so, begin this moment the work of subjugating your temper. You are in imminent peril of ruining your family. A passionate mother or father, is like a fury with a sceptre in one hand, and a fire-brand in the other: and when the king is a fury, the subjects are likely to be furies, too; for nothing is more contagious than bad temper. O, how many parents have had to bewail, with weeping eyes, and almost broken hearts, the effects of their own irritability, as apparent in the headstrong, passionate dispositions of their children. It is against this evil that the admonition of the apostle is directed, "*forbearing threatening.*" Passion blinds the judgment, leads to undue severity, fosters partialities, in short, is the source of a thousand evils in the domestic government. An irritable person can never manage discipline with propriety, but is ever prone to correct, when correction should never be administered—in a rage. Parents, I beseech you to control your temper, and acquire a calm, imperturbable disposition, for this only can fit you to rule your household in wisdom, justice, and love.

A *habit of discrimination* is a very important qualification in parents; a penetrating insight into character; an acuteness in judging of motives.—Such a talent is of immense consequence in the domestic community; and connected with this, a quickness of discerning disposition, together with an inventive and ingenious faculty of adapting treatment to the varieties of character and propensity which are continually exhibiting themselves.

A *kindness of manner*, an affectionate, persuasive address, is of great importance. It is desirable for parents to render their company pleasant to their children, to engage their confidence, to exert over them the influence of love, which certainly cannot be done, by a cold, or churlish, or distant behavior.

*Prudence and good sense* are qualities of such inestimable worth, and depend so much upon education, that all who have the care of children, should perpetually exhibit them for imitation. A rash, thoughtless father, a wild romantic mother, do incalculable mischief in a family.

*Firmness* is essentially requisite in parents; that disposition, which though at the remotest distance from all that is rigid, stern, and cruel, can master its own feelings, and amidst the strongest appeals to the tenderer emotions of the mind, can inflexibly maintain its purpose; and in the way of denying improper requests, or administering correction, can inflict pain on the object of its affection, whenever duty requires such an exercise of beneficial severity. For want of this disposition, of this fine and noble quality, how many have ruined their children for ever by indulgence.

*Varied information* and extensive knowledge are very desirable. Parents should be able to direct the studies, to answer the inquiries, to correct the mistakes, to assist the pursuits, and in short, to superintend the general instruction of their families.

*Unvarying and inflexible consistency* should be exhibited by all whom Providence has placed at the head of a household. They should be not only excellent, but *consistently* excellent. An unbroken uniformity should reign over their whole character. Nothing contradictory, inexplicable, irreconcilable, should ever be seen.

Let all who are likely to become parents, look at this picture, and learn how they are to prepare for the performance of their duty; and let those who already sustain this relationship, correct their errors and supply their defects by this rule.

4. Parents should settle with themselves what is their chief desire, and highest object of pursuit, in reference to their children.

Without fixing on some end, we shall never, in any course of action, proceed with much steadiness, comfort, or success: and where many ends are, and may be with propriety contemplated and sought, the *chief* one must be definitely selected, and continually kept in view, or we shall ever be in danger of misapplying our energies. Let parents then, consider the ends which they should propose to themselves, in reference to their children, and decide among all those that are lawful, which is supreme, and which are subordinate. There are *many* lawful ones, but only one of these can be supreme. And what is that? RELIGION. What Christian can for a moment hesitate here? What genuine believer can for a moment question, whether his children's eternal salvation ought to be the supreme solicitude of his heart? If we look to the great bulk of mankind, it is perfectly evident that religion hardly enters into their view; they are very willing that their children should go to church or to meeting, according as they themselves are church people or dissenters; but as to any anxiety about the religious character, the formation of pious habits, they are as destitute of every thing of this kind, as if religion were a mere fable, or were nothing more than a mere Sabbath day form. Their chief object is, either elegant and fashionable accomplishments, or learning and science, or perhaps prudence and good sense: and provided their sons and daughters excel in these, they never make any inquiry, or feel any anxiety whether they fear God; and would be not only surprised, but would either laugh you to scorn, or scowl upon you with indignation, for proposing



such fanatical or methodistical questions in reference to *their* children. Yes, this is the way of the greater part of parents, even in this *religious* country. To train them up to shine and make a figure in society is all they seek. Amazing folly! Dreadful and murderous cruelty! Degrading and grovelling ambition! To lose sight of the soul, and neglect salvation, and forget immortality! To train them in every kind of knowledge but the knowledge of religion; to instruct them in an acquaintance with every kind of subject, but to leave them in ignorance of God their Creator, their Preserver and Benefactor! To fit them to act their part well on earth, and to leave them unprepared for heaven! To qualify them to go with respectability and advantage through the scenes of time, and then to leave them unmeet for the glorious and enduring scenes of eternity! O strange fondness of irreligious parents! O miserable destiny of their hapless offspring!

In direct opposition to this, the chief end of every Christian parent, must be the spiritual interests, the religious character, the eternal salvation of his children. Believing that they are sinful and immortal creatures, yet capable of being redeemed through the mediation of Christ, his highest ambition, his most earnest prayer, his most vigorous pursuit, should be engaged for their eternal welfare. His eye, his heart and his hope should be fixed on the same objects for them as they are for himself, and that is upon eternal life. This should be the nature and exercise of his anxiety. "I am desirous, if it please God, that my children should be blessed with the enjoyment of reason, of health, of such a moderate portion of worldly wealth and worldly respectability as is compatible with their station in life: and with a view to this, I will give them all the advantages of a suitable education: but above and beyond this, I far more intensely desire, and far more earnestly pray, and far more anxiously seek, that they may have the fear of God in their hearts, be made partakers of true religion, and be everlastingly saved. And provided God grant me the latter, by bestowing upon them his grace, I shall feel that my chief object is accomplished, and be quite reconciled to any circumstances which may otherwise befall them; for rather would I see them in the humble vale of poverty, if at the same time they were true Christians, than on the very pinnacle of worldly grandeur, but destitute of true piety." Such should be the views and feelings and desires of all Christian parents; religion should be at the very centre of all their schemes and pursuits for their offspring. This should be the guiding principle, the directing object, the great land-mark by which all their course should be steered.

Having made these preliminary remarks, I go on to enumerate and illustrate the various branches of parental duty.

First. There are some which relate more directly to the PRESENT LIFE, and the FORMATION OF THE CHARACTER GENERALLY.

1. *Maintenance* is of course a claim which every child justly prefers upon his parents, till he is of a sufficient age to be able to provide for himself.

2. *Schoolastic instruction* is another duty we owe our children. The dark ages are happily past away, and a flood of light is now poured, and is still pouring over all classes of the people. Instruction is become general, and even they who are too poor to buy knowledge for their children, are not ashamed to beg it in our Sunday and charity schools. No man should suffer his family to be, in this respect, behind the age in which they live. To grudge the money spent in this way, is a cruel and detestable niggardliness. A good education is a

portion, the only one which some are able to give to their children, and which in many cases, has led to every other kind of wealth. In this, however, we are to be guided by our rank in life, and circumstances; and for a laboring man or a small tradesman to impoverish himself in order to procure the same kind and degrees of accomplishment for his children, as a rich man and a nobleman would for theirs, is an ambition sanctioned neither by reason nor revelation. Where it can be accomplished, parents should prefer domestic instruction, to sending their children away from home: no school can possess the advantages which are to be enjoyed under the eye of a judicious father or mother. But how few are judicious: how few are equal to the task of a general superintendence of the business of instruction; and how few can command the advantages of it at home. Let all such be careful in the selection of a school, for it is a matter of infinite consequence. Let them be guided in their choice, not by a mere regard to accomplishments; not by a view to the best drawing, dancing, music, or Latin master. This is an age of gaudy exterior decoration. But let them first regard religion, then, the real cultivation of the mind, and the formation of good habits. Wherever real piety is inculcated, a thirst for knowledge excited, and habits of application, reflection, sobriety of judgment, and good sense are formed, that is the school to be selected by a wise and Christian parent. No word is more abused than that of EDUCATION, which, in the mind of many, signifies nothing more than the communication of knowledge. But this is only a part, and a small part of education, which, in fact, means the formation of character. A youth may have his head stuffed full of Latin, Greek, mathematics, and natural philosophy; a girl may draw, and dance, and play, and speak French exquisitely, and yet be miserably educated after all. Integrity, good sense, generosity, and a capacity for reflection, are worth all the acquirements which even a university can bestow. Not, however, that these are incompatible with each other; by no means: and the perfection of education is the union of both.

3. *A due regard to the health of children* should be maintained.

Physical education is of no small importance.—Knowledge gained at the expense of health, is purchased at a dreadful expense. And there are other ways of injuring the health of children, besides a too close application to learning, which does indeed, but rarely occur. Fond and foolish mothers should be warned against pampering their appetites with sweets, corrupting their blood with grossness, or impairing the tone of their stomachs with fermented liquors. Infanticide is practised, even in this Christian land, by many who never dream that they are child murderers: they do not kill their babes by strangling or poisoning them; no, but by pampering or stuffing them to death. And where they go not to this extreme, they breed up a circle of gluttons, or drunkards. Nothing can be more disgusting, than to see children invited to eat all the delicacies of the dinner, and to drink after it the health of the company, and with what their young palates ought to be strangers to. And lamentably injudicious is it, to make the gratification of the appetite a reward for good conduct, and to have them ushered into the parlor before they retire to rest, to receive the luscious sweet, which is the bribe for their going quietly to bed. The mischief goes beyond the corruption of their health, for it brings them up to be governed by appetite, rather than by reason, which is, in fact, the secret cause of all the intemperance and profligacy of the world. Settle your plans on this subject, and suffer neither a favorite servant, nor a kind aunt, nor a doating

grandpapa, to come between you and the welfare of your children.

4. *Bring up your children with low notions of the importance of riches, and worldly show, and of the power which these things have either to give respectability to the character, or to procure happiness.*

Do not let them hear you magnify the value of wealth by your words, nor see you do it by your actions. Avoid an obsequious attention to the rich and great; point not to them as the individuals most to be admired and envied. Discover no undue solicitude about grandeur of abode, or furniture.—From the time that they are capable of receiving an idea, or an impression, teach them it is CHARACTER that constitutes true respectability; that a good man is reputable in any circumstances, a bad man in none. Remind them of the danger of riches, and that they are Satan's baits to tempt men to love the world, and lose their souls. Not that you should produce a cynical disposition towards either riches or the rich; much less repress industry, and foster indolence: no; but encourage them to consider and to seek wealth, rather as a means of usefulness, than a source of personal gratification.

5. *Inculcate industrious habits.*

Caution them against sauntering and slothfulness. From the dawn of reason, endeavor to convince them, not merely by argument, but by a reference to their own experience, that employment is pleasure, and idleness misery. Impress them with the value of time; that it is the stuff of which life is made, and that we lose as much of life, as we do of time. And connected with this, enforce habits of order and punctuality. The parent that neglects to do this, is guilty of enormous unkindness towards his children; who, if they grow up without these, incommode themselves, and are a source of prodigious inconvenience to their friends.

6. *Economy is no less necessary.* Industry and economy are virtues of civilized life. Savages never possess them, but spend their time in idleness, and squander what comes in their way in wastefulness. It is reason overcoming the vis inertiae which is natural to man, that produces industry and economy; and when we consider how important they are to the well being, not only of individuals, but of society, our efforts should be employed to foster them in the minds of our children. But in inculcating economy, we must be careful not to drive the mind into covetousness; hence it is of consequence, that with all our endeavors to cherish frugality, we should be no less assiduous to encourage generosity; and to impress them with the idea, that the end of saving is not to hoard, but to distribute to the wants of others.

7. *Provide for your children suitable employment.* Happily the pride and indolence of feudal times are gone by, and it is our felicity to live in a country where trade and industry are accounted honorable, and where the aristocracy softens down into the democracy, by almost insensible degrees; where a poor, proud gentleman, that scorns the vulgarity of trade, begins to be thought a very despicable character; and the diligent, honest, and successful tradesman, regarded as an honorable member of the community. "The good, sound common sense of mankind will never annex character to a useless life. He who merely hangs as a burden on the shoulders of his fellow men, who adds nothing to the common stock of comfort, and merely spends his time in devouring it, will be invariably, as well as justly, accounted a public nuisance." Let parents, therefore, take care to bring up their children to some suitable business; in the selection of which, due regard should be had to their own circumstances, for it is great folly, and unkindness also, to se-

lect for a child a business, so much above his father's station and property as to leave no rational hope that he can ever enter upon it with a prospect of success. In the advance of society we see innumerable instances of foolish pride of this kind; and indeed it is a pretty general thing for parents to be ambitious to obtain for their children a higher grade in society than their own. Many, who have really acquired wealth in a reputable, though perhaps not the most genteel trade, (for trades have their aristocratic distinctions,) seem anxious that their sons should be a step higher than themselves, and instead of sending them to business, look out for a profession, and there is a wondrous rage for professions in the present day; or if they are retail tradesmen, must make their sons wholesale ones; or if they are manufacturers, must start them as merchants; and if they are merchants, must elevate them into gentlemen. What abject folly is it for a man to turn away the attention of his children from any good and honorable business which he has followed with success, merely because it is not genteel. I believe that great harm has been done by an injudicious system of scholastic instruction, which has become too exclusively classical. Literature, when kept within due bounds, and properly united with mercantile branches, does not in itself unfit a youth for business, but it is considered as the acquirements of those who are intended to be professional men, or gentlemen; and when almost exclusively pursued to a late period in boyhood, it turns off the attention from business, and partially unfits for it. A very undue importance has been attached, in our schools, to polite literature; to the neglect of science and commercial knowledge. Let every Christian tradesman, who has a business worth following, keep as many of his sons as he can at home with him, and educate them himself for trade in his own warehouse. Due attention must of course always be paid in the selection of a business, to the physical strength, to the mental capacity, and to the prevailing taste of a child.

7. *Generosity should be most assiduously inculcated.*

All children, and consequently all mankind, are more or less selfish by nature. This should be early watched and checked by a judicious parent, and an opposite disposition inculcated. Even infants may be made to feel the pleasure of sharing their possessions with others. Let them be taught that enjoyment arises not from individual gratification, but from a communion in pleasure. As children advance in years and reason, they should hear much of the happiness arising from gratifying others; of the luxury of benevolence, and of the meanness of greediness. We should descend on the beauty of generous actions, and of beneficent examples. Anecdotes of remarkable generosity should be read to them, and especially should we dwell upon the wondrous love of God, and the remarkable compassion of Jesus Christ. We should send them on errands of mercy to the poor and needy, that being spectators both of their misery, and of their tears of gratitude for relief, they might acquire a disposition to do good. We should especially encourage them to make sacrifices, and to practise self-denial to do good. To give them *extra* money, in order that they may relieve the poor, or support religious institutions, is doing them very little good; for this is only being generous at other people's expense; but they should be induced to save their own pocket money, and distribute their regular allowance, and thus forego the gratification of their own palate, for the purpose of relieving the wants of others. But they should never be *compelled* to give, never have their money stopped for this purpose; never be *finned* for misconduct, and have their fines appropriated



to charity; for all this is calculated to disgust them with benevolence.

Great care should be taken, at the same time, not to induce a habit of indiscriminate distribution, which would render them the dupes of hypocrisy, the subjects of imposition, and the victims of extortion. We should teach them the difference between real benevolence, and that easy good nature, which allows itself to be wheedled out of every thing; between the generosity of a correct judgment, and that of a weak and credulous mind; between principle and mere feeling.

8. *Prudence* is of vast consequence in the affairs of life. This is, next to piety, the most valuable quality of character. Nothing can be a substitute for it; and it does more for the comfort of its possessor, more for the happiness of society, than any other attribute of mind that can be mentioned.—Half the miseries of some persons' lives, who are good people too, arise from a rash, thoughtless, indiscreet mind. They never think before they speak or act: they have no power, or exercise none, of forethought, deliberation, or calculation. Such persons are firebrands without intending it, and commit immense mischief, without, perhaps, a particle of malice. How important, then, that children should be early taught the nature and value of discretion. Many parents most egregiously err on this subject: some are anxious only to communicate knowledge; forgetting that ideas are worth nothing, but as they are discreetly employed to produce happiness.—Knowledge has only the materials of comfort; it is wisdom that must put them together into form and consistency. Others almost despise prudence; it is not a classical, a scientific, a poetic quality. It cramps genius, extinguishes taste, prevents the lofty, though somewhat erratic flights of an ardent mind; it is cold and calculating; it has nothing sublime or romantic about it; it never soars into the clouds, or plunges into the depths, but holds on its dull course, on the low level of ordinary concerns. And therefore, just on this very account, it is the very thing that is to be coveted. Foolish, foolish creatures! And so you would have your children geniuses! that disdain the restraints of wisdom; and resemble mere fire works that burn and blaze out only to please others by their brilliancy and splendor, without doing good to any one! O be not so cruel to yourselves, to your children, to society.—Teach them to cultivate a deliberative, a reflecting, a calculating judgment; to weigh their words, and measure their actions; enforce upon them a habit of looking onward to the tendency and results of conduct; the calm and regular government of the soul, which leads its possessor to observe true measures, and a suitable decorum in words, and thoughts, and actions. Give them all the learning you can procure for them; I quarrel not with this: but in your own estimation, and in all your conduct towards them, exalt wisdom far above learning, genius, taste, accomplishments; and in this sense of the word, teach them *that the price of wisdom is above rubies*.

Now I am anxious to impress upon the mind of all parents, that the inculcation of these dispositions, forms, in fact, the very essence of education. This term, as I have already remarked, and I repeat the sentiment again and again, not by accident or oversight, but with the design of more deeply impressing it, has been very generally misapplied, because, in fact, misunderstood. Education, in modern parlance, means nothing more than *instruction*, or the communication of knowledge to the mind; and a *good* education means, the opportunity of acquiring all kinds of learning, science, and what are called accomplishments. But properly speaking, education in the true and higher import of the term,

means, the implanting of right dispositions, the cultivation of the heart, the guidance of the temper, the formation of the character. Or allowing, as we must, that education applies to the whole soul and character, and includes general instruction in knowledge. I should say that its most important part is that which relates to the communication of active principles, and the formation of moral habits. It is *TRAINING UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO*. Not merely the training up a child in the way he should think, or speculate, or translate, or dance, or draw, or argue, but the way in which he should *go*. Every thing may be taught which can sharpen the faculties, or store the mind with ideas, or cultivate the taste; but we must not stop here, but consider that the highest end of education, is the formation, first of the religious character, and then of the useful, amiable, intelligent, and generous member of the social community.

If this be true, and who will venture to deny it, then is it perfectly manifest, that the great work of education cannot be, and ought not to be, transferred from parents to others. They may purchase that tuition, which their own circumstances may disqualify them from imparting; but the education of the character belongs to *them*, and cannot be transferred. Here I cannot resist the temptation of introducing a long extract from Mr. Anderson's incomparable work.

"Placed by the all-wise providence of heaven in such a peculiar situation, it will be well for you to keep especially in view, what may be denominated, *THE EDUCATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES*. Let purchased tuition be carried up to the very highest perfection, and let neither money nor wisdom be spared in reaching this height; of such vital importance in the training of children is that department to which I now refer, that it can, and if neglected will, undermine and undo the whole, as well as render many efforts in educating the disposition altogether abortive. Suffer me to explain my meaning.

"In the laudable anxiety of their hearts, two parents, with a family of infants playing around their feet, are heard to say, 'Oh! what will, what can best educate these dear children?' I reply, 'Look to *yourselves* and your *circumstances*.' Maxims and documents are good in themselves, and especially good for the regulation of *your* conduct and your behavior towards them: but with regard to your children, you have yet often to remark, that many maxims are good, precisely till they are tried, or applied, and no longer. In the hands of many parents, they will teach the children to talk, and very often, little more. I do not mean to assert, that sentiments inculcated have no influence; far from it; they have much; though not the most: but still, after all, it is the sentiments you let drop occasionally, it is the conversation they overhear, when playing in the corner of the room, which has more effect than many things which are addressed to them directly in the tone of exhortation. Besides, as to maxims, ever remember, that between those which you bring forward for their use, and those by which you direct *your own* conduct, children have almost an intuitive discernment; and it is by the latter they will be mainly governed, both during childhood and their future existence.

"The question however returns, 'What *will* educate these children?' And now I answer, 'Your example will educate them—your conversation with your friends—the business they see you transact—the likings and dislikings you express—these will educate them; the society you live in *will* educate them—your domestics *will* educate them: and whatever be your rank or situation in life, your house, your table, and your daily behavior, these, *these* will educate them. To withdraw them from the

unceasing and potent influence of these things is impossible, except you were to withdraw yourself from them also. Some parents talk of *beginning* the education of their children; the moment they were capable of forming an idea, their education was already begun—the education of circumstances—insensible education, which, like insensible perspiration, is of more constant and powerful effect, and of far more consequence to the habit, than that which is direct and apparent. This education goes on at every instant of time; it goes on like time—you can neither stop it nor turn its course. Whatever these, then, have a *tendency* to make your children, that, in a great degree, *you* at least should be persuaded they will be.

"The language, however, occasionally heard from some fathers, may here not unseasonably be glanced at. They are diffuse in praise of maternal influence; and pleased at the idea of its power and extent, they will exclaim, 'O yes, there can be no doubt of it, that every thing depends upon the mother.' This, however, will be found to spring from a selfish principle, and from anxiety to be relieved from mighty obligations, which, after all, cannot be transferred from the father's shoulders, to those even of a mother: to say nothing of the unkindness involved in laying upon her a burden, which nature never intended, and never does. Her influence, as an instrument, indeed, a husband cannot too highly prize; but let no father imagine, that he can neutralize the influence of his own presence, and his own example at home. He cannot, if he would, nor can he escape from obligation. The patience and constancy of a mother, are no doubt, first mainly tried, but *then* those of the father. The dispositions in each parent are fitted by nature for this order in the trial of patience; but from the destined and appropriate share allotted to each, neither of the two parties, when in health, can relieve the other.

"Addressing myself, therefore, to both parents, I would say, 'Contract to its just and proper dimensions, the amount of all that purchased education can do for you, and expect no more from it than it is truly able to perform. It can give instruction. There will always be an essential difference between a human being cultivated and uncultivated. In the department of purchased tuition, you will portion out to the best advantage, many of those precious hours of youth which never will return; and such employment will lend you powerful aid in forming those personal habits, which lie within the province of parental education; but rest assured, and lay it down to yourselves as a cardinal principle, that the business of education, properly so called, is not transferable. You may engage a master or masters, as numerous as you please, to instruct your children in many things, useful and praiseworthy in their own place, but you must by the *order* of nature, *educate* them yourselves. You not only ought to do it, but you will perceive, if I am correct in what I have stated, and may still advance, you *must* do it, *whether you intend it or not.*' 'The parent,' says Cecil, 'is not to stand reasoning and calculating. God has said, that his character *shall* have influence: and so this appointment of Providence becomes often the punishment of a wicked or a careless man.' As education, in the sense I have explained, is a thing necessary for all—for the poor and for the rich—for the illiterate as well as the learned, Providence has not made it dependant on systems, uncertain, operose, and difficult of application. Every parent, therefore, save when separated altogether from his family, may be seen daily in the act of educating his children; for from father and mother, and the *circumstances* in which they move, the children are daily advancing

in the knowledge of what is good or evil. The occupations of the poor man at his labor, and of the man of business in his counting-house, cannot interrupt this education. In both instances, the mother is plying at her uninterrupted avocations, and her example is powerfully operating every hour; while at certain intervals daily, as well as every morning and evening, all things come under the potent sway of the father or the master, whether that influence be good or bad. Here, then, is one school from which there are no truants, and in which there are no holidays.

"True, indeed, you send your children to another school, and this is the very best in the whole neighborhood, and the character of the master there, is not only unexceptionable, but praiseworthy. When your children come home too, you put a book of your own selection into their hands, or even many such books, and they read them with pleasure and personal advantage. Still, after all this, never for one day forget, that the first book they read, nay, that which they continue to read, and by far the most influential, is that of their parents' example and daily deportment. If this should be disregarded by you, or even forgotten, then be not at all surprised when you find, another day, to your sorrow and vexation, and the interruption of your business, if not the loss of all your domestic peace and harmony, that your children only 'know the right path, but still follow the wrong.'"

Secondly.—But I now go on to illustrate and enforce those duties which parents owe to their children, IN REFERENCE TO THEIR RELIGIOUS CHARACTER, AND THEIR ETERNAL WELFARE.

Not that religion is to be taught separately from all other branches of education, as an abstract thing of itself, for it is *not* an abstract thing of itself, but an integral part of the character, the substratum of all the qualities that have been already stated. "Bring them up in the fear, and nurture, and admonition of the Lord:" this is all the apostle enjoined on the subject of education, and it is the substance of all we are to teach: whatever is opposed to this must not be taught, and all that is taught or enjoined must be inculcated with a direct or indirect reference to this. In the selection of a school even for obtaining the elements of general knowledge, in the branches of tuition that he permits his children to be taught, a Christian parent must have his eye upon religion, and this must be the polar star by which he steers.

Still, however, for the sake of making the matter more clear and obvious, as the subject of solemn obligation, I place religious education by itself: and it includes—

#### 1. INSTRUCTION.

As soon as reason dawns, religious instruction should commence. The subject matter of instruction includes every thing which forms the fundamental points of revealed truth. The character of God, the spirituality of his law, the fall of man, the evil of sin, the person and work of Christ, the need of repentance, the justification of the soul by faith, the nature and necessity of regeneration, the operating power of love to Christ as the spring of obedience, the solemnities of judgment, the immortality of the soul, the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous. All these should be familiarly taught, according as the capacity is able to receive them. Our instruction should not be confined to mere generalities, but should proceed from the beginning, on evangelical principles. The basis of our teaching should be the Bible itself. Not that I would totally discard all catechisms. I do not see why definitions and explanations—and what else are the answers in catechisms—may not be as useful in religion, as in any other subject.



Catechisms are injurious only when they push out the Bible, not when they lead to it. Still I admit, that the Bible should be the text book. Every child should learn a portion of Scripture daily, and have it explained to him. A great prominence in all our instruction should be given to the *law* of God, as binding the conscience, and the consequent exceeding sinfulness of every human being; together with the wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as the sinner's only Saviour. Much use should be made of the historical parts of Scripture, as illustrating by its facts the character of God, the evil of sin, the consequences of disobedience. Abstract principles alone will not do. Children like facts, and must be taught through the medium of their imagination. Instruction must be conveyed in a *pleasing form*. In order to this, there must be no wearying them by long lectures; no disgusting them by long tasks. I reprobate the practice, as a most injurious one, of setting a long lesson of catechism or Scripture to a reluctant child, and then punishing him for not learning it. If we wish to disgust their minds with the ways of godliness, this is the way to do it. Many an injudicious parent, in the very act of teaching piety towards God, calls into existence and activity, the very tempers which it is the design of religion to suppress. An angry and scolding father, with a catechism in one hand, and a rod in the other, railing at a stubborn child for not learning his lesson, is not a scene very calculated to invest religion with an air of loveliness and a power of attraction for young minds: the only association which, in such a circumstance, a child can be expected to form with learning to be pious, is that of a dark room or cane; pain of body and insufferable disgust of mind. I would say to many a parent, "do give over the business of teaching religion till you can command your temper, and attract the child to the subject as that which is agreeable." *Never set religious tasks to your children, as penalties for bad conduct.* To be made to learn catechism or Scripture, in solitary confinement, and upon an empty stomach, and thus to connect imprisonment and fasting with the penance, is a sure way to finish the aversion, which the rod has commenced. Instead of compelling a child to learn religion, because he is naughty, which is reversing the order of things; he ought not to be permitted to touch so holy a thing in so evil a temper.

Instruction, to be valuable, must always be delivered with *great seriousness*. The light and trifling way in which it is sometimes delivered, destroys all its effect, and reduces it to the level of a mere science. It ought not to be exclusively confined to the Sabbath, but be the business of every day; yet it should be especially attended to on the day of rest, when the family should be interrogated, as to what they understand and remember of the sermons they have heard in the house of God. Children cannot too early be made to comprehend the purpose for which they go up to public worship, and that they have a personal interest in all the sacred services of our religious assemblies. No parent who has a numerous family, and who resides in a large town, where much time must necessarily be occupied in going to, and returning from, his place of worship, should attend the house of God more than twice on the Sabbath: the other part of the day should be occupied in the midst of his family. This is far too generally neglected in this day of over much preaching.

Instruction should be *adapted to the capacity of the children*, and keep pace, in depth and variety, with the strengthening of their faculties. Provide for them suitable books; and, as they advance in age, enter with them more into the depths of theological truth; unfold to them the beauty, the grandeur and

sublimity of revelation; instruct them in the evidences of the Bible; the proofs of its fundamental doctrines. I am not very fond of boys and girls writing religious themes, or conducting any researches of a religious nature, as a mere exercise of ingenuity, except their minds are already well disposed towards religion, as a matter of personal experience.

2. PERSUASION, ADMONITION, AND WARNING, are a very important part of religious education.

The apostles, "knowing the terrors of the Lord," *persuaded* men; they besought them to be reconciled to God; and warned them of the consequences of unbelief. Parents must do the same with their children, and not satisfy themselves with merely communicating ideas. They should, in the most earnest, anxious, affectionate manner, represent to them their spiritual condition, warn them of the consequences of neglecting the great salvation, and entreat them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and fear God. They should address them collectively and individually, on the subject of their soul's concerns; they should manifest such a deep solicitude for their spiritual welfare, as would constrain their children to feel, that the most anxious desire of their parents' heart, in reference to them, was for their salvation. This should not however be done merely when their children have offended them, nor should they, on every slight occasion of misconduct, have a ready recourse to the terrors of the Lord.—Parental authority must not be supported exclusively by the thunders of heaven, or the torments of hell.

These subjects should never be referred to, but in seasons of solemn and affectionate admonition. It would also be prudent not to be so frequent in the business of admonition, warning, and persuasion, as to excite nausea and disgust. Many good, but injudicious people, completely overdo the matter, and defeat their own purpose; they worry their children on the subject of religion, and thus increase the aversion that is already felt. Nothing in the way of bitter reproach, or of railing accusation, for the want of piety, should ever be uttered; nor should anger ever be manifested. In the case of elder branches of the family, a word or two occasionally spoken, and always in great mildness and tenderness, is all that is desirable. Incessant remonstrance, is in such instances, likely to be heard with indifference, if not with dislike. Such young people should be left pretty much to their own judgment and conscience, and to the force of parental example.

3. *Discipline* is unspeakably important. We have considered the father as the *prophet* of his family, we are now to view him as their *king*; and his laws are as important as his instructions. By discipline then, I mean, the maintenance of parental authority, and the exercise of it, in the way of restraining and punishing offences. Parents, you are invested by God himself with an almost *absolute* authority; you are constituted by him the supreme magistrate of your household, and cannot have a right idea of your situation, without considering yourself as appointed to *rule*. You must be the sovereign of the house, allowing no interference from without, no resistance from within. You have no option in the matter, and are not permitted to abdicate the throne, or cast away your sceptre. It was mentioned as a high commendation of Abraham, that he would *command* his children after him. But although you are to be absolute monarch, uniting in yourself the legislative and executive department, you are to be no tyrant. Your government must be firm, but mild: the love of the parent must not relax the reins of the governor, nor the authority of the governor diminish aught from the love of the parent. You must have a sceptre, and always hold it, but it must not be an iron one. You must never suffer the yoke to be thrown off from your children, but then it must

be a yoke which they shall have no *inclination* to throw off, because it is easy, and the burden light. Of you in *your* measure, it should be said, as it is of God,

"Sweet majesty, and awful love,  
Sit smiling on his brow."

Your authority must be presented to your children as soon as reason is awake. The first thing a child should be made to understand, is that he is to do, not what he *likes*, but what he is commanded: that he is not to govern, but to be governed. The sceptre should be seen by him before the rod; and an early, judicious, and steady exhibition of the former, would render the latter almost unnecessary.—He must be made to submit, and that while young, and then submission will become a habit: the reins must be felt by him *early*, and he will thus learn to obey them. All commands should be *reasonable*: there should be no wanton, capricious use of authority; we must not thwart and cross the wills of our children merely to teach submission. They should perceive clearly that love is at the bottom of all we do, and that reason guides all our conduct. We should calculate beforehand, whether there is a necessity for the injunction we are about to deliver, and a probability of our being able to ensure compliance; for a wise parent will not enjoin any thing, if he can help it, that has not these circumstances connected with it. Commands should be sacred things, not issued in sport, for the child to play with. Nothing but what is wise should be enjoined, and every injunction that is issued should be obeyed. In many cases, it is beyond our power to ensure obedience: and then nothing remains but punishment.

*Correction* is an essential part of discipline; for rewards and punishments are as necessary in the government of a family, as in that of a state. What saith the wisest of men? "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. The rod and the reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Do not many mothers know this by bitter experience? Even in lesser matters, have they not a thousand times blushed at the rudeness, ill manners, and impertinence of children "left to themselves;" and in *greater* matters, have they not lived to vent the heaviest reproaches upon their most abject folly, in spoiling their children by leaving them to their own obstinate tempers, self-will, and rebellious conduct, without ever correcting them: "correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give thee the delight of thy soul." Inimitably beautiful precept; and as true as it is beautiful. "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son." How many are there who thus hate their children? a very strong expression, I admit: and yet these very persons would be thought the fondest of parents. Would you suffer your children's bodies to perish, rather than put them to pain in eradicating a disease, which, if suffered to remain, would be fatal? Would not this be hating them? And what do you call that conduct, which, rather than put them to pain by correcting their faults, suffers all kinds of moral diseases to increase, and fester, and corrupt the soul? Fond mother, you that will never correct a child, hear the charge, and let it thrill through your heart, exciting emotions of horror—you are a hater of your child; your foolish love is infanticide; your cruel embraces are hugging your child to death. In not correcting him, you are committing sin of the heaviest kind,

and your own wickedness in not correcting him will at last correct yourself.

I would not, however, be thought to enjoin a cruel or even a stern and rigid severity. I do not thin this compatible with the admonition given by the apostle, not to irritate, nor "provoke our children to wrath, lest they be discouraged." We must *govern by punishment*: the sceptre must not be converted into a whip. The first object of every parent should be to render punishment unnecessary. It is better to prevent crimes than punish them. This can be done, certainly, to a very considerable extent; but it requires a very early, very judicious, and very watchful system of training. Many have very little of what may be called, the faculty of government, and late coercion and punishment come in to supply the place of early guidance. The only time is suffered to go by without being improved, in which it is possible, in most cases, so to train the dispositor, as to do in future without much punishment; for if discipline, wise, steady, firm discipline, do not commence as soon as the passions begin to develop, it is too late then to be accomplished without some degree of severity.

Mr. Anderson strikingly illustrates this part of the subject, by a very familiar allusion: "I recollect hearing of two coaches which used to drive into Newmarket from London, by a certain hour, at a time of strong competition. The horses of the coach which generally came in first, had scarcely a wet hair. In the other, though last, the horses were jaded and heated to excess, and had the appearance of having made great efforts. The reader perhaps, understands the cause of the difference.—The first man did it all of course, by the reins: the second, unsteady in himself, or unskilful in the reins, had induced bad habits, and then employed the whip; but he could never cope with the other. So it will ever hold in all government. If obedience to the reins is found to be most pleasant in itself, and even the road to enjoyment, then obedience will grow into a habit and become, in fact, the choice of the party."

This, then, is the first thing to be attended to, acquire skill in the management of the reins; govern by guiding, not by forcing. But still, there are many, very many cases, in which the reins alone will not prove to be enough; the whip is wanted, and where it is wanted, it ought to be supplied. Not that I mean to enforce a system of *corporeal* punishment; no: this may be necessary occasionally, as an *experiment* in difficult cases, but as a *system* it is bad and unavailing, and is usually the resource of passionate, ignorant, or indolent parents and masters. We should from the dawn of reason, endeavor to make our children feel, that our favor is their richest reward for good conduct, our displeasure the severest rebuke for misbehavior. Happy the parent, who has attained to such skill in government, as to guide with a look, to reward with a smile, and to punish with a frown.

Occasions, I admit, sometimes do occur, and not unfrequently, in which the interposition of a severer chastisement becomes necessary; and these are the emergencies which require the full stretch of parental wisdom. Take the following rules for your guidance.—Never chastise in a state of wrath.—Some parents can never punish, except when it ought never to be done,—when they are angry.—This is passion, not principle; and will always appear to the child as if it were intended, more to appease and ratify the parent's bad temper, than to promote his welfare. No parent, in such a state of mind, can be in a condition nicely to adjust the kind and degree of punishment to the offence; it is like administering medicine scalding hot, which rather burns than cures. God waited till the cool of the



evening, before he came down to arraign, try, and punish our first parents after their fall.

Patiently examine the offence before you punish it. In every case, let there be the solemnity of judicial investigation; for justice always should proceed with a slow and measured step. Accurately discriminate between sins of presumption, and sins of ignorance or inadvertence. Accidents should be reproofed, but not punished, unless they involve wilful disobedience. Most wisely and equitably apportion the sentence to the degree of offence and the disposition of the offender. Ingenuous confession, and sincere penitence, should in most cases arrest the process of judgment, and the child be made to punish himself by remorse. Satisfy not yourselves till you have produced repentance, for till you have done this, scarcely any thing is done. Hatred of the sin on the part of the offender, is a much more effectual preservative from its repetition, than fear of punishment. Do not keep instruments of punishment, such as the rod or the cane, constantly in sight, for this is to govern by fear, rather than by love.—Be very cautious not to threaten what you either do not intend, or are not able to inflict; yea, forbear threatening as much as possible. A parent's denunciation should not be hastily uttered for children to laugh at. In the case of older children, the greatest caution is necessary, in expressing a parent's displeasure: reasonable expostulation, mild rebuke, tender reproof, appeals to their understanding and feelings and conscience, are all that can be allowed in this instance. If beating ever do good, it is only in infancy, before the understanding can be made sufficiently to argue upon the heinousness of the offence: afterwards it can only provoke and harden. Through the whole course of discipline and government, let parents ever remember, that their children are *rational* creatures, and are to be dealt with as such, by having the grounds of obligation laid open to them, the criminality of disobedience explained, and the evils of insubordination laid before them. To a parent storming or fretting over the inefficacy of punishment, I would say, "Have you treated that child as a brute, or a rational creature? Have you taken pains with him from infancy, to make him understand his obligations, and to comprehend the criminality of disobedience; or have you governed him by threatening and beating?" I again say, that where *necessary* punishment is withheld, it is a hating of the child; but the great object should be to render punishment *unnecessary*. Put the *reins of guidance* upon the disposition while your children are infants, and acquire great skill in these: and if you manage the reins well, you will have less need of the whip.

It is of vast consequence, that parents should be very careful not to foster, by injudicious treatment, those very propensities, which, when more fully developed, they will find it necessary to repress by discipline. Do not encourage lying and ill nature, by smiling at a false or malignant expression, because it is cleverly said. Nor nourish pride by excessive flattery of commendation. Nor vanity, by loading them with finery, and both admiring them, and teaching them to admire themselves. Nor revenge, by directing them to vent their impotent anger upon the persons or things that have injured them. Nor cruelty, by permitting them to torture insects or animals. Nor insolence and oppression, by allowing them to be rude to servants. Nor envy, by stimulating too powerfully the principle of emulation. Infinite mischief is done by thus thoughtlessly encouraging the growth of many of the germs of vice.

Discipline, to be effectual, should be *steady* and *unvarying*, not *fitful* and *capricious*: it must be a system which, like the atmosphere, shall press al-

ways and every where upon its subjects. Occasional fits of severity, however violent, but which are followed by long intermissions of relaxing indulgence, can do no good, and may do much harm. Each extreme is mischievous, and each prepares for the mischief of the other. *Both parents should join* to support domestic authority; for a more truly distressing and injurious spectacle can scarcely be seen in the family circle, than a fond and foolish mother, counteracting the effects of paternal chastisement, by stealing to the little prisoner in his captivity, to comfort him in his distress, to wipe away his tears, and to hush his sorrows, by some gratification of his palate. In this way children have been sometimes hardened in their crimes, set against their father, and led to ultimate and irretrievable ruin.

Wonder not that I have placed discipline under the head of *religious* education; for, is it not the object of domestic government to bend, as far as means can do it, the will of a child into submission to the authority of a wise and holy parent? And what is sin against God, but the resistance of a weaker will against that which is supreme and divine? Now surely it may be conceived to be in the order of God's appointed means of bringing the child into subjection to himself, to bring him first into subjection to his parents. Can any one be in a state of mind more hardened against religion, more opposed to all its just and salutary restraints, than he who rejects the mild yoke of parental government, and sets at defiance the authority of a father? Obedience to parents is one of the laws of heaven, and the first of all its laws, which the mind of an infant can be made to understand; and if parents enforce it, as they should do, with a direct reference to the appointment of God, they are certainly taking a preliminary step, so far as means can be employed, for the formation of the religious character.

4. *EXAMPLE* is necessary to give power and influence to all other means.

One of the tritest of all proverbs, is the power of example; but its force is greatest upon the youthful mind: "during the minority of reason, imitation is the regent of the soul, and they who are least swayed by argument, are most governed by example." We all learn of this preceptor, before we can reason, yea, before we can speak. If then we would have our children live in the fear of God, we must ourselves be seen by them, steadily walking in the way of his commandments. In alluring them to religion, we must be enabled to say, "Follow me." Our religion should not only be upon the whole sincere, but it should be *visible*: our light should shine before our family, that they, seeing our good works, might glorify God. But for our religion to produce any effect, it must be *eminent*: there must be no doubt, no uncertainty about the matter; it must not be a thing of a questionable nature. It should be *consistent*. I remember once conversing with a man of great eminence for station, talents, and piety, who said to me: "I owe every thing, under God, to the eminent and consistent piety of my father. When I was a young man, though I was not vicious, I was worldly; and in order the more effectually to get rid of all interference with my pursuits, from religion, I wished to think it all mere profession and hypocrisy. For this purpose, I most narrowly watched the conduct of my father; for such was the height on which he stood as a professor of religion, that I very naturally concluded, if I could convict him of such inconsistency as amounted to a proof of hypocrisy,—and a little thing would at that time have sufficed for such a purpose,—I should have gained my end, and have concluded that all piety was but a name and a de-

lusion. But so thoroughly consistent was he, that I could find nothing in the smallest degree at variance with his character as a professor of religion. This kept its hold upon me. I said to myself, there must be a reality here, and I must try to understand and feel it; for I have seen such meekness in a temper naturally irritable, such comfort amidst the greatest agonies, and all this supported by such uniform devotion, that I must try to catch his spirit." This beautiful instance of the influence of parental example, is, perhaps, not altogether unique, though in all its circumstances, perhaps rarely equalled.

Children have their eyes always upon their parents, and are quick to discern any violations of consistency. If, notwithstanding our profession of religion, they see us as worldly minded, as grasping and anxious after riches, as solicitous to be surrounded by splendid furniture, luxurious gratifications, and fashionable habits, as the people of the world;—if they see the righteous rarely at our table, except when they are great people, or popular characters, but observe there the gay, the fashionable, the ungodly;—if they witness us artful, implacable or malicious;—if they know us to be cruel or neglectful to our wives, unkind and oppressive to our servants, cold and tyrannical to them;—if they witness us inconstant in our attendance upon private, family, or public worship—what can they conclude, but that *our* religion is mere profession? In such a case, of how little service is our attempt to impress upon their minds those claims, which we ourselves practically deny? It were far better for some parents to say nothing to their children about religion, for, till they alter their own conduct, their admonitions can produce no other effect, than to excite insufferable disgust. It is enough to make every parent tremble, to think what a parent should be.

And there should be consistency also, between our professions, and our conduct in reference to our families. We avow it to be our supreme and ultimate desire, that *they* should be truly pious; and we tell them so. Do we in all things act agreeably to this principle? Do we select schools and situations; books and companions; pursuits and occupations, in reference to this desire? Do we in our general conversation *with* them, and *before* them, support this declaration? Do not our children sometimes reason thus?—"My parents tell me, that their chief anxiety is for my salvation, and the formation of my religious character; but how does this comport with their selecting for me a school where religion is the last thing attended to? With their instructing me in some things, which, as religious people, I hear them condemn? How is it, that all the anxiety of their conduct, whatever their words may say, appears to be, to make me a fine lady, that can dance well, and exhibit an elegant form, and display polished manners? I am told that *religion* is the first thing, but I am educated for the world." Ah, if we act thus, we are not training up our children in the way they should go. Without example, every thing else that we do, is most lamentably deficient: as has been often said, it is only pointing them the way to heaven, but leading them in the way to hell.

5. DILIGENT, CONSTANT, AND CAREFUL INSPECTION, is a most important parental duty.

There should be in every family a system of domestic episcopacy. Parents should be watchful in all things. This is the way to preserve the good seed of instruction which is sown, and to prevent the enemy from sowing tares, which he is ever wakeful to do when the parent is asleep. This is a very difficult, but a very necessary duty. We must never allow any engagements whatever, to take off, long together, our eye from our children.

As soon as their character begins to unfold, we should most carefully watch its development, that we may know what regimen to place it under. We should study their propensities, capacities and tendencies. We should watch them in play, in their intercourse with each other, with servants, with their companions, and when they are not dreaming that our attention is directed towards them: for character is decided by incidents, which a superficial mind would deem too minute to be noticed.—We should see how they behave after punishment and reward: in short, their whole character should be studied and inspected by us with the most minute and anxious care; just as the different plants in a nursery are investigated by a gardener, that he may know the peculiar nature which each possesses, and the appropriate treatment which each requires.

We should also inspect our family, so as to know what good or evil is going on among them; whether the good seed is growing, and what tares are springing up. Like the farmer going out to inspect his fields, or the gardener his trees, to ascertain what prospect there is of a crop, and what weeds are to be eradicated, what vermin to be destroyed, what gaps to be stopped to keep out enemies, what excrescences to be removed, what assistance to be afforded; so must the parent be and act among his children. One is growing up with a propensity to pride, *he* must be taught with great care, the beauty and excellence of humility; a second is vain of personal decorations and acquirements, *she* must have such fully exposed, and be saved from its injurious influence upon her character; a third is artful, equivocating and deceitful, *he* must have the enormity of lying unfolded to him, and be encouraged to practise more frankness, ingenuousness, and regard to truth; one is remarkably curious, and needs to have this inquisitiveness checked; another dull, and needs to have it stimulated; one is skeptical, and is in danger of infidelity; another credulous, and is in peril of imposition. Now there must be a constant scrutiny carried on by the parent, to ascertain these peculiarities, and manage them accordingly.

Inspection must extend to every thing. To the *servants* that are admitted into the house; for how much injury might be done to the youthful mind, by an unprincipled and artful servant. The *companions* of our children should be most narrowly watched: one bad associate may ruin them for ever. The very first workings of the social impulse, even in a boy or girl of five or six years of age, should be noticed; for even thus early may evil impressions be produced by companionship. At the risk of offending the nearest relative, or most endeared friend he has upon earth, a Christian parent ought not to suffer his children to associate with those, who are likely to do them harm. On this account, domestic education is decidedly to be preferred, where it can be obtained, to schools. A system of extensive and dreadful mutual corruption is oftentimes going on among young people, before it is perceived.

Parents should most carefully inspect the *reading* of their children, and keep out of their way all corrupting books, and indecent pictures. And how deeply is it to be deplored, that our *newspapers* are oftentimes so polluted with filthy details of disgusting occurrences and trials, as to be channels through which moral contamination flows into many a family, otherwise well guarded. It becomes a serious question, whether it is the duty of a Christian, who has sons and daughters growing up, to allow a newspaper to come into his house. News-rooms, on this account, are to be decidedly preferred.

The *recreations* of children should be watched, and no games be allowed that are immodest, or likely to foster a spirit of gambling.



For want of this diligent, careful, and universal inspection, the best instructions, the most earnest warnings, the most fervent prayer, and the most consistent example, have been in some cases, unavailing; and the children left to themselves, and to the corrupting influence of others, have grown up,—their parents' misery, and their own disgrace.

#### 6. PRAYER must crown all.

This duty commences with the birth of a child, *even*, before that event; for in the very prospect of its birth, there should be earnest prayer offered to God by the parent, for divine grace to discharge all those obligations, which the expected babe will bring upon the conscience of the father and mother. And from that time forward till the death of either parent or child, earnest, secret, believing prayer, should never cease to be daily presented for our offspring. Our prayers should principally respect the *spiritual* welfare of our children. Daily we should wrestle with God for their eternal salvation. How little can we do at most for their welfare, and how ineffectual without God's blessing, is all we do, or can do. That parent has neglected a very important branch of his duty, who has suffered one single day to pass by, without bearing his children upon his heart before God in private prayer. Who can subdue their tempers, or change their hearts, but God? And though in a way of sovereignty, he confers his grace upon some who neither seek it themselves, nor have it sought for them, by their friends, yet we are not authorized to expect it without prayer.

It is necessary, also, not only to pray for our children, but *with* them. We should take them apart each by himself to commend them to God, and thus make them the witnesses of our deep solicitude and our intense agony for their eternal welfare.—If they have been disobedient and wicked, it may be well, when they are brought to a right mind, and when we ourselves have forgiven them, to conduct them to the throne of divine grace, to beg for them the *divine* forgiveness: but this must never be done as a punishment, for this is the way to make them dread a parent's prayers, as a visitation of his displeasure.

But, besides this, there must be **FAMILY PRAYER**.

The necessity and propriety of this, arise out of the constitution of the family; and were it not enjoined in the word of God, either by precept or example, would still be binding upon the conscience of every parent, by the relation in which he stands to his family, and the extent of their dependence upon God. Do we not want family mercies; and who can give them but God? So obviously obligatory is this duty, and so naturally does its performance arise out of all our conjoint feelings as parents and as Christians, that those who neglect it cannot even pretend to feel the right influence of godliness.

No duty, however, has been more abused than this. By some it is only *occasionally* performed; it is taken up perhaps in times of domestic distress or solicitude; by others it is attended to on a Sabbath evening; and by many, very many others it is, though regularly observed, nothing but a mere lifeless form, and thus felt not only to be insipid but a mere burden. The following directions may be of service to guide the heads of families in this most interesting branch of domestic duty.

1. It should be offered up morning and evening; thus beginning and closing every day.

2. It should be observed with the greatest regularity, and an uninterrupted constancy. What a disgrace to a parent is it, for a child or a servant to say, "are we to have prayer this evening?" And yet, are there not some families in which the prac-

tice is so irregular, as to leave the matter doubtful, till the bell rings?

3. All the members of the family should be present, except very young children, who cannot be made to sit still, and whose inquietude and restlessness are a disturbance to all the rest, and utterly destroy the solemnity of the service.

4. It should be attended to so early in the morning as not to subject the service to the intrusion and interruption of visitors and secular business; and so early in the evening, as not to be rendered the mere form of a drowsy circle, who ought at that time to be in bed. It is an offence to the Almighty, to conduct a family into his awful presence, merely to sleep there.

5. There should be a fixed hour, and the hour should be most sacredly kept, and not be interfered with, except at the dictate of necessity. In order to this, the heads of families should not sup from home, nor yield to the modern practice of late visiting.—The fashionable hours of ten or eleven o'clock at night, are driving out *evening* prayer, and the eagerness of commercial pursuits, putting a stop, in many families, to the *morning* sacrifice.

6. A portion of holy Scripture should be read, from the Old Testament, one part of the day, and from the New Testament, the other. A book should be read through in regular course, and not a chapter picked out, or stumbled upon by accident. The Scriptures should be audibly read, and in a reverential manner, and with a devotional spirit, for very great evils result from reading the Scriptures in a careless, slovenly, and irreverent manner. It would be well for the parent to require the children and servants to bring their Bibles with them, that the eye may help the ear, in fixing the attention of the mind. The domestic prophet should also accompany what he reads with short explanatory and hortatory remarks of his own, or the expository comments of others.

7. When there are persons in the family that can sing, family praise should ascend to heaven. The morning or evening hymn of a pious family, is one of the most touching sounds in our world.

"Lord, how delightful 't is to see,  
A pious household worship thee,  
At once they sing, at once they pray,  
They hear of heav'n, and learn the way."

8. Then follows the prayer, which should be not so long as to weary, nor so short as to seem like a mere form: it should be fervent, for a dull, cold, heartless repetition of almost the same things in almost the same words, is sure to destroy all the interest of this delightful service, and to render it a mere form, which wearies and burdens, if it do not also disgust. How difficult is it to keep up the life and vigor of this engagement! And why? Because we do not keep up the life and vigor of our personal religion. It is worth while to remark, that the habit of reverential reading the Scriptures tends to feed the flame of devotion, and to kindle the fire of the sacrifice of prayer. The prayer of the head of a family, should be in a very peculiar degree **FAMILY** prayer. It should respect the children, the servants, the circumstances of the household. All should feel that the service belongs to them, and not merely to the individual who prays, or to the church and the world. But fervor, and life, and earnestness, as opposed to what is dull and formal, is of immense consequence. A few petitions breathed forth with a fervor that kindles the fire of devotion in all around, are far better than half an hour's talking about religion to God.

Oh! with what dignity, and grace, and sanctity, and authority, does a holy and fervent father rise

from his knees, and take his seat in the midst of his family, while yet the rays of divine glory play upon his countenance. "Children," says Dr. Dwight, "naturally regard a parent with reverence; but they cannot fail to reverence him more or less, on account of his personal character. Wherever they have been accustomed to behold their parent daily sustaining the office of minister or servant of God, they necessarily associate with every idea they form of his person and character, this solemn and important apprehension. Every image of this venerable relation presented to their minds, will include in it, that of a divinely appointed guardian of their spiritual concerns; a guide to their duty, given them from above: a venerated and beloved intercessor for their salvation." And the same writer, in speaking of family worship, says, "In the devotion of this little assembly, parents pray for their children, and children for their parents: the husband for the wife, and the wife for the husband; while brothers and sisters send up their requests to the throne of Infinite Mercy, to call down blessings on each other. Who that wears the name of a man can be indifferent here? Must not the venerable character of the parent, the peculiar tenderness of the conjugal union, the affectionate intimacy of the filial and fraternal relations; must not the nearness of relations long existing, the interchange of kindness long continued, and the oneness of interests long cemented—all warm the heart, heighten the importance of every petition, and increase the fervor of every devotional effort."

It may now be proper to inquire, how it comes to pass that such a system as this is so often unsuccessful? For it may, with very great propriety, because with truth, be affirmed, that the families of professors, are not always, as might be expected, the nurseries of the church. It is not enough to resolve the matter into the sovereignty of divine grace, till we have inquired, whether any thing can be found in the conduct of parents, which can be said with truth, to account for the painful fact, of irreligious children being found in religious families.

Have parents really adopted and pursued a judicious system of religious education? Can it be said, that means, such as I have directed, or any thing at all like them, have been regularly pursued? Has there been a deep, a constant solicitude for the eternal welfare of their children?

In the introduction of my volume, entitled, "The Christian Father's Present to his Children," I have stated the obstacles which often prevent the success of a religious education, and have enumerated the following:

1. Religious education is oftentimes very ignorantly, negligently, and capriciously maintained: where it is not altogether omitted. It is not a *first* object, it is attended to with no earnestness, no anxiety, no system, no regularity. It does not run through every thing, and is opposed by many things at variance with it. The parents' eye and heart are more intently fixed upon the worldly prosperity and respectability of the children, than on their religious character.

2. The relaxation of domestic discipline is a powerful impediment in the way of success. There is, in some households, no family government, no order, no subordination. The children are kept under no restraint, but are allowed to do what they like; their faults are unnoticed and unpunished, and their tempers allowed to grow wild and headstrong, till in fact, the whole family become utterly lawless, rebellious against parental authority, and unamiable to all around them. How many have had to curse the over indulgence of fond and foolish parents. How many, as they have ruminated

amidst the desolations of poverty, or the walls of a prison, have exclaimed, "O, my cruelly fond parents, had you exercised that authority with which God entrusted you, over your children, and had you checked my childish corruptions, and punished my boyish disobedience: had you subjected me to the salutary restraint of wholesome laws, I had not brought you with a broken heart to your grave, nor myself with a ruined character to a jail."

Over indulgence is awfully common, and continually making shocking ravages in human character. It is a system of great cruelty to the children, to the parents themselves, and to society. This practice proceeds from various causes; in some instances, from a perverted and systematic sentimentalism; in others, from absolute indolence, and a regard to present ease, which leads the silly mother to adopt any means of coaxing, and yielding, and bribing, to keep the young rebels quiet for the time; in others, from a mistake as to the time when restraint should begin, or a spirit of procrastination, which leads parents to say, "I shall take them in hand by and by: there is no time lost; when their reason is a little more matured, I shall lay upon them more restraint;" and in some it is "mere animal affection," without the guidance of a particle of judgment, a mere instinct, like that which in the irrational tribes, leads to a blind and busy affection. It is not uncommon for parents to treat the first acts of puerile rebellion, rather as freaks to be smiled at, than as faults to be reformed. "O," says the mother, "it is only play, he will know better soon. He does not mean any harm. I cannot chide him." No; and if the father, wiser than herself, does, she cries, and perhaps, in the hearing of the child, reproves her husband for cruelty. From whatever cause it proceeds, it is in the highest degree injurious to the character of the children; let those who are guilty of it read the fearful comment on this sin, which is furnished for their warning, in the history of Eli and his family.

3. Undue severity is, perhaps, more injurious than over indulgence; and it is, perhaps, a conviction of this, and an observation of the mischievous consequences of extreme rigor, that has driven many into the opposite extreme. I have seen the dreadful effects of parental tyranny, and the reign of household terror, in the broken spirits, the reckless desperation, the hardened contumacy, or the deep and sullen melancholy of those who have been the subjects of these hard measures. It is a truly revolting sight to see a *father* employing the iron rod of the oppressor to beat, and bruise, and crush the minds of his own offspring into the most abject submission. He may succeed, but let him not wonder, if at the same time that he has suppressed rebellion, he has extinguished affection. I have known parents, who, too late have seen their error, and who would give the world, did they possess it, if it were possible to do away the ill effects which their severity had produced in the character of their children: but the mischief was irreparable. No subsequent kindness could expand the heart, which they had closed for ever against them, or win that confidence which they had repulsed from them. A close, sullen, melancholy disposition had been nurtured: a susceptibility to the emotions of wretchedness had been planted in the bosom, which no future tenderness on the part of the parent could remove. He saw it, and repented it, but could not alter it. "Ye fathers, provoke not then your children to anger, lest they should be *discouraged*." This language is really very striking, and well deserves the serious attention of every parent.

4. The inconsistent conduct of parents who are professors of religion, is a great hinderance to the success of religious instruction. Many persons



have no need to wonder that *their* children are *not* pious; it would have been a wonder with every body else if they were, for they have seen nothing at home, but what was calculated to disgust them with religion. They would have been far more likely to have thought well of the ways of godliness, if their parents had said nothing about them.

5. The bad conduct of an elder branch of a family, often counteracts all the efforts made for the benefit of the rest. Let parents see the importance of *beginning* upon a good system. Children are creatures of imitation, and the models they copy after, are their elder brother or sister. A mother should educate the character of her *first* child, with the recollection, that he will be a pattern which the rest will, in all probability, more or less conform to. I do not think this has been sufficiently considered.

6. Partiality has a very corrupting and fatal influence. The history of the patriarch Jacob, first the victim, and afterwards the subject of this sin, will remain for ever a warning to all parents, against the dangers of domestic favoritism. The balances of government must be held in every family, by even handed justice, or misery is sure to ensue. Envy and jealousy are the natural consequences of partiality. Father and mother are sometimes embroiled, the children are set against each other, and all conspire against the favorite.

Behold these obstacles, and avoid them.

And now, can *motives* be necessary to admonish Christian parents to the diligent performance of their duty? If so, take the following:—

1. Are you zealous for the cause of religion in the world, for the prosperity of Zion, for the interest of the Redeemer, for the glory of God? Be diligent and anxious to train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Would you have them the enemies, or the friends of God and his cause? Dare you pretend to be the disciples of Christ, if this is a matter of indifference to you? If you are neglectful in this matter, you may expect to see your offspring united with the children of this world, if not with infidels, scoffers or the profane. But if you are anxious and conscientious to train them up for God, that daughter over whom you watch with such parental care and tenderness, may be joined with the female worthies, who by their chaste conversation, and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and their zeal for the cause of Christ, have done so much to diffuse religion in the world. That son whom you now train with such holy solicitude, for future usefulness, as a disciple of the Saviour, may become eminent in the church, as a consistent and intelligent member, or an able and faithful minister. "Many a congregation," says Baxter, "that is happily fed with the bread of life, may thank God for the endeavors of some poor man or woman, that trained up a child in the ways of God, to become their holy and faithful teacher." The church of God looks to the families of the righteous, and expects and asks from thence, those supplies which are to recruit its members, and to repair the ravages of death.

2. I urge this duty by a due regard to the temporal and eternal welfare of your children. You love your children, and would deem it a most cruel and insulting insinuation to have your affection for a moment questioned. But do what you will for them: devote as you may the energies of body and mind; the sleep of your nights and the activities of your days to your children's comfort: wear out your strength in ceaseless labor and solicitude, and yet at the same time neglect the religious education of your children, you are guilty of a species of most horrid cruelty towards them, the bitter consequences of which may begin in this world in profligacy and vice, and extend to the other in all the

bitter pains of eternal death. Unrestrained by sentiments of piety, uncontrolled by a conscience which has never been enlightened, what is to prevent them from being plunged into infamy by their unbridled passions? Have not many young men at the hulks, in the land of exile, or at the gallows; and many unhappy females when closing in misery a course of infamy, cursed their parents for not giving them a religious education? But even though they live and die in worldly honor and respectability, what will this do for them amidst the sorrows of life, the agonies of death, the solemnities of judgment, and the torments of perdition! Hear them as they stand shuddering and affrighted on the brink of that gulph into which they are about to plunge. "Of what avail are the riches and honors and pleasures of the world, which my parents were so anxious to obtain for me? Why did they not tell me that the salvation of my soul was of more importance to me as an immortal creature, than the possession of the universe? Cruel, cruel parents! Fool that I was, to be blinded and rendered careless by you: but my self-reproaches are now unavailing; I deservedly perish, but my blood be upon the head of those that neglected me." Ah, cruel parents indeed, who neglect the religious education of their children: more cruel in some respects than Herod; he slew the bodies of children, these murder souls; he murdered the children of others, these murder their own; he employed the agency of his servants, these do the work of slaughter themselves.

3. Do you regard your own comfort? Do you love yourselves? Are you anxious to avoid painful and incessant solicitude, bitter reflection, domestic disquietude, dreadful foreboding? Then bring up your children with the most unvarying regard to their religious character. Should God crown your efforts with success, what a harvest of joys will you reap even in this world. When you see your children enter the paths of wisdom, "Thank God," you exclaim, "my highest ambition has at length reached its object. My children are decided Christians. I am now no longer distressingly anxious for their future prospects in this life. In one way or other, God will provide for them. And as to eternity, they are safe." Who can describe the pure, elevated felicity with which such parents mark the course of their children, in going from strength to strength in their progress to Zion.—What a season of delight is that, when they publicly assume the profession of a Christian, and connect themselves with the church! What joy is felt in beholding them at their side at the table of the Lord, and holding communion with them in the joys of faith and the anticipations of eternity. And what satisfaction is experienced in seeing them enrolling their names as the friends of God and man, and giving their support to those institutions which are formed to promote the highest interests of the human race. As they grow in experience, in usefulness, in respectability in the church, the parents' joy and gratitude are continually increasing, and they feel the honor of having sent such members into the fellowship of the faithful. Should God in the mysteries of his providence remove them by an early death, you will be cheered amidst the agonies of separation, by their dying consolation; their piety will wipe away your tears, and be a balm to the wounds of your mind; and when they have departed, you will solace yourselves with the healing thought, that they have gone to that world of glory in which you will soon be reunited with them. Or should the order of nature be observed, and you precede them to the tomb, will not *their* presence and attentions in your dying chamber, be more soothing by the consideration, that they are so many

saints, as well as children, ministering to your comfort? Will not their piety give a sanctity and a sweetness to all the offices of their affection? "I die," will be your expression, as like departing Jacob, you address yourselves to them, "but God will be with *you*, and we shall meet again, where there will be no more death."

But should you unhappily neglect their religious education, and they, through your neglect, should grow up without any due sense of the claims of God, is there not a danger of their becoming immoral, as well as irreligious? And how could you bear to witness, or to hear of their profligacy and vice, if at the same time, you were conscious that it was in a measure through your neglect? Perhaps they may be unkind and disobedient to you; for God may justly render that child a scourge to his parent, whose parent did not train him up in the ways of religion. O what scenes of domestic misery, what heart-rending spectacles of confusion and wretchedness, have profligate children occasioned in the families to which they belong! How many have thus had their hearts suddenly broken, or their grey hairs brought down by the slow process of withering sorrow, to the grave: and the sting of all this, in some cases, has been the consciousness of parental neglect. No sin more heavily punishes itself than this, nor mingles for its subject a more bitter cup. But then, the eternal consequences, oh, the eternal consequences of this neglect. See the heart-stricken parent, wringing his hands over the dying youth, who is departing without repentance. No, not a syllable escapes his lips that sounds like penitence: the father weeps, and prays, and entreats, but the son hearkens not, and dies, and makes no sign. Now in what a burst of agony does he give vent to his feelings over the corpse, from which the spirit has departed, but departed not to the mansions of the blest. "Oh, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son."

Or, in the event of your own death, what thorns will it plant in your pillow, with what deeper shades will it invest the descent to that dark valley, to reflect that you had neglected the religious character of your children, and the eternal salvation of their immortal souls. Then, amidst these fearful scenes, to awake to a sense of your duty, when it is too late, except by one parting admonition, to perform it. Then to see those around your bed, with whom you had been entrusted, but whom you had neglected.

But there are other scenes more dreadful still.—The faithless parent must meet his neglected children at the day of judgment, before the bar of God. Fearful will be the interview; and to us, now, utterly inconceivable. No imagination can portray the scene, and I attempt it not. And then, eternity, oh! eternity!—who shall bring out from the secrets of that impenetrable state, the condition of children, lost in some measure, through the neglect of their parents; and the condition of parents, hearing through everlasting ages, the imprecation and reproaches of their own offspring, and all these imprecations and reproaches echoed back from their own conscience. But the picture is too appalling—and if the mere anticipation chills with horror, what must be its reality.

Look for a few moments at a *brighter scene*, and anticipate the meeting at the judgment day, of pious parents and children reclaimed, converted, saved, by the blessing of God upon their affectionate solicitude, and judicious and persevering efforts for their eternal welfare: but this is as much too bright for the imagination, as the other is too terrific. It is glory, honor, and felicity too great to be

imagined. And beyond all this, everlasting ages remain, for the child to be blessed with salvation, and the parent to be blessed with the consciousness of having been the happy instrument of eternal blessedness to his own offspring.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO THEIR PARENTS.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth."

EPHES. vi. 1, 2, 3.

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee."

PROVERBS vi. 20—22.

"The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice; and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice."

PROVERBS xxiii. 24, 25.

PERHAPS there is no duty, the obligations of which are more generally acknowledged, than filial piety; none which in the performance yields greater pleasure, or which, if neglected, brings a more severe or righteous retribution. All nations, however sunk in barbarism or elevated by science, have admitted the strength and justice of parental claims, and the unhappy youth who resists them, stands convicted, condemned, and reprobated before the tribunal of the world. On the other hand, an eminently dutiful child is an object of delight, admiration, and esteem to all who have an opportunity of witnessing his conduct; he goes through society surrounded by a glory purer than that of fame, and far more conducive to his own comfort: he is a blessing to his parents, and is blessed himself. Children, may all of you be such: and for that purpose, I ask your most fixed attention to the statement of your duties, as set before you in this chapter. The obligations of social life are reciprocal. If your parents owe to you all that I have enjoined upon *them*, how much do you owe to your parents? I have been your advocate with *them*, I now become theirs with *you*.

Consider well the relation you sustain to your parents. There is a *natural* connection between you, inasmuch as they are the instruments of your very existence; a circumstance which of itself seems to invest them, as I have already said, with an almost absolute authority over you. The commonness, the universality of the tie, takes off the mind from contemplating its closeness, its tenderness, its sanctity. You are literally parts of themselves, and cannot dwell for a moment upon your descent, without being struck, one should think, with the amazing and solemn weight of obligation that rests upon you towards a father and a mother. But consider, there is not only a natural, but in reference to duty, an *instituted* connection between you: Jehovah himself has interposed, and uniting the language of revelation with the dictates of reason, the force of authority, to the impulse of nature, has called you to filial piety, not only as a matter of feeling, but of principle. Study then the relationship, look narrowly and seriously at the connection subsisting between you. Weigh well the import of the word PARENT: think how much is implied in it towards its appropriate object, how many offices it contains in itself,—guardian, ruler, teacher, guide, benefactor, provider; WHAT THEN MUST BE THE OBLIGATIONS OF A CHILD?



The following is a brief summary of filial duties:—

1. You ought to LOVE your parents.

Love is the only state of mind from which all the other duties that you owe them can arise. By love, we mean complacency: and surely this is due to a father and mother. The very relation in which you stand to them demands this. If you are destitute of this, if you are without any propensity of heart towards them, you are in a strange and guilty state of mind. Till you are married, they ought, in most cases, to be the supreme objects of your earthly affections. It is not enough for you to be respectful and obedient, and even kind; but, where there exists no reasons for alienating your heart, you should be *fond* of them. It is of infinite importance that you should watch over the internal state of your mind, and not suffer dislike, alienation, or indifference, to extinguish your regards. Do not take up a prejudice against them, nor allow an unfavorable impression to be made upon your mind. Respect and obedience, if they do not spring from love, are valueless in their nature, and very precarious in their existence.

If you love them, *you will delight to be in their company*, and take pleasure in being at home with them. It is painful to them to see that you are happier any where than at home, and fonder of any other society than theirs. No companion should be so valued by you as a kind father or mother.

If you love them, *you will strive in all things to please them*. We are always anxious to please those whom we regard, and to avoid whatever would give them pain. If we are careless whether we please or displease any one, it is obviously impossible that we can have any affection for them. The essence of piety towards God is a deep solicitude to please him; and the essence of filial piety, is a solicitude to please your parents. Young people, dwell upon this single simple thought, A CHILD'S PLEASURE SHOULD BE TO PLEASE HIS PARENTS. This is the essence of love, and the sum of all your duty. If you would adopt this rule, if you would write this upon your heart, if you would make this the standard of your conduct, I might lay down my pen, for it includes every thing in itself. O that you could be brought to reason and to resolve thus:—"I am bound by every tie of God and man, of reason and revelation, of honor and gratitude, to do all I can to make my parents happy, by doing whatever will give them pleasure, and by avoiding whatever will give them pain. By God's help, I will from this hour study and do whatever will promote their comfort. I will make my will to consist in doing theirs, and my earthly happiness to arise from making them happy. I will sacrifice my own predilections, and be satisfied with their choice." Noble resolution, and just and proper! Adopt it, act upon it, and you will never repent of it. Do not have any earthly happiness, that is indulged at the expense of theirs.

If you love them, *you will desire their good opinion*. We naturally value the esteem of those to whom we are attached: we wish to be thought highly of by them; and if we are quite careless about their respect for us, it is a sure sign we have no regard for them. Children should be desirous, and even anxious to stand high in the opinion of their parents, and nothing can be a more decisive proof of a bad disposition in a son or a daughter, than their being quite indifferent what their parents think of them. All love must be gone in such a case as this, and the youth is in the road to rebellion and destruction: commendation has lost its value, censure its efficacy, and punishment its power.

2. REVERENCE is the next duty.

"Honor," saith the commandment, "thy father and mother." This reverence has respect to your *feelings*, your *words* and your *actions*. It consists in part, of an inward consciousness of their superiority, and an endeavor to cherish a reverential frame of mind towards them, as placed by God over you. There must be high thoughts of their superiority, both natural and instituted, and a submission of the heart to their authority in a way of sincere and profound respect. Even your love must be that which is exercised and expressed towards a superior. If there be no reverence of the heart, it cannot be expected in the conduct. In all virtue, whether it be that higher kind which has respect to God, or that secondary kind, which relates to our fellow creatures, we must have a right state of heart; for without this, virtue does not exist.

Your *words* should correspond with the reverential feelings of the heart. When speaking to them, your address, both in language and in tones, should be modest, submissive, and respectful: not loud, boisterous, impertinent, or even familiar: for they are not your equals, but your superiors. If at any time you differ from them in opinion, your views should be expressed, not with the flippancy and pertinaciousness of disputants, but with the meek inquisitiveness of pupils. Should they reprove, and even more sharply than you think is due, you must lay your hand upon your mouth, and neither answer them again, nor show resentment. Your reverence for them should be so great, as to impose a considerable restraint upon your speech in their company; for much is due to the presence of a parent. It is exceedingly offensive to hear a pert, clamorous, talkative young person, unchecked by the countenance of a father or mother, and engaging much of the conversation of a party to himself. Young persons should always be modest and retiring in company, but more especially when their parents are there. You should also be careful about the manner of speaking of them to others. You should never talk of their faults, for this is like Ham, uncovering the nakedness of his father. You must not speak of them in a jocose or familiar manner, nor say any thing that would lead others to think lightly, or to suppose that you thought lightly of them.—If they are attacked in their reputation, you are with promptitude and firmness, though with meekness, to defend them, so far as truth will allow, and even if the charge be true, to make all the excuses that veracity will permit, and to protest against the cruelty of degrading your parents in your presence.

Reverence should extend to all your *behavior* towards your parents. In all your conduct towards them, give them the greatest honor, let it be observed by others that you pay them all possible respect, and let it also be seen by themselves, when there is no spectator near. Your conduct should always be under restraint, when they are within sight; not the restraint of dread, but of esteem. How would you act if the king were in the room? Would you be as free, as familiar, as noisy, as when he had retired, or before he had entered? I am of opinion, that parents let down their dignity, and undermine their authority, by allowing the same rude and boisterous behavior in their presence, as in their absence.—This should not be. When reason is expanding in children, they should be made to understand and feel the truth of what I have already affirmed, that there is an outward respect due to the very presence of a parent. All rude and noisy rushing in and out of a father or mother's company is unmeet.—It is the etiquette of our court, that no one shall enter the royal presence, when the king is upon his throne, without obeisance; nor in retiring, turn his back upon the throne. I do not ask for the same

obsequiousness in families but I ask for the principle from which it arises, a respectful deference for authority.

### 3. The next duty is OBEEDIENCE.

"Children, *obey* your parents," says the apostle in his epistle to the Colossians. This is one of the most obvious dictates of nature; even the irrational creatures are obedient by instinct, and follow the signs of the parent beast, or bird, or reptile. Perhaps there is no duty more generally acknowledged than this. Your obedience should *begin early*; the younger you are, the more you need a guide and a ruler. It should be *universal*; "Children obey your parents," said the apostle, "in all things."—The only exception to this, is when their commands are, in the letter or spirit of them, opposed to the commands of God. In this case, as well as in every other, we must obey God, rather than man. But even here your refusal to comply with the sinful injunction of a parent, must be uttered in a meek and respectful manner, so that it shall be manifest you are actuated by pure, conscientious motives, and not by a mere rebellious resistance of parental authority. Your obedience should have no other exception than that which is made by conscience: in your situation, inclination and taste are out of the question; both must be crossed, opposed, and set aside when opposed to parental authority. It should be *prompt*. As soon as the command is uttered, it should be complied with. It is a disgrace to any child that it should be necessary for a father or a mother to repeat a command. You should even anticipate, if possible, their injunctions, and not wait till their will is announced in words. A tardy obedience loses all its glory. It should be *cheerful*. A reluctant virtue is no virtue at all.—Constrained and unwilling obedience, is rebellion in *principle*; it is vice clothed in the garment of holiness. God loveth a cheerful giver, and so does man. A child retiring from a parent's presence, muttering, sullen, and murmuring, is one of the ugliest spectacles in creation: of what value is any thing he does in such a temper as this? It should be *self-denying*. You must give up your own wills, and sacrifice your own predilections, and perform the things that are difficult, as well as those that are easy. When a soldier receives a command, although he may be at home in comfort, and he is required to go at once into the field of danger, he hesitates not, he considers he has no option. A child has no more room for the gratification of self-will than the soldier has: he *must* obey. It should be *uniform*. Filial obedience is generally rendered without much difficulty when the parents are present, but not always with the same unreservedness, when they are absent. Young people, you should despise the meanness, and abhor the wickedness of consulting the wishes, and obeying the injunctions of your parents, only when they are to witness your conduct. Such hypocrisy is detestable. Act upon nobler principles. Let it be enough for you to know what is the will of a parent, to ensure obedience, even though continents laid, and oceans rolled between you and your father. Carry his injunction with you every where; let the voice of conscience be to you, instead of his voice, and the consciousness that God sees you, be enough to insure your immediate compliance. How sublimely simple and striking was the reply of the child, who, upon being pressed in company to take something which his absent parents had forbidden him to touch, and who, upon being reminded that they were not there to witness him, replied, "very true, but God and my conscience are here." Be it your determination to imitate this beautiful example of filial piety, and obey in all things even your *absent* parents.

### 4. SUBMISSION TO THE FAMILY DISCIPLINE AND

RULE is no less your duty than obedience to commands.

In every well ordered family, there is a rule of government; there is subordination, system, discipline, reward and punishment: and to these, *all* the children must be in subjection. Submission requires that if at any time you have behaved so as to render parental chastisement necessary, you should take it patiently, and not be infuriated by passion, or excited to resistance. Remember that your parents are commanded by God to correct your faults, that they are actuated by love in performing this self-denying duty, and that it costs them more pain to inflict it, than it does you to endure it. Ingenuously confess your faults, and submit to whatever punishment their authority and wisdom might appoint. One of the loveliest sights in the domestic economy, next to that of a uniformly obedient child, is a disobedient one brought to a right sense of his misconduct, and quietly submitting to the penalty he has incurred. It is a proof both of strength of mind, and of good disposition of heart, to say—"I have done wrong, and it is meet I should bear chastisement."

In the case of elder children, such, for instance, as are fourteen and upwards, all other correction than that of rebuke, and the expression by language of parental displeasure, is of course out of the question: but where this is necessary, such young persons as have merited it, should exercise profound submission. It is exceedingly painful when a parent, in addition to the extreme pain which it costs him to administer reproof to such children, has to endure the anguish produced by their utter indifference, smiling contempt, sullen murmuring, or insolent replies. This conduct is the more guilty, because the authors of it are arrived at an age when they may be supposed to have advanced so far in the growth of their understanding, as to perceive how deeply laid are the foundations of the parental authority in nature, reason and revelation, and how necessary it is that the reins of parental discipline should not be relaxed. If then, you have committed one error in deserving reproof, do not commit another in resenting it. Keep all still within—let not your passions rebel against your judgment—but suppress in a moment the rising tumult of the soul. The conduct of some children after reproof, is a deeper wound on the heart of a parent, than that which preceded and deserved reproof. On the other hand, I know not a greater mark of nobleness of mind, nor any thing which tends to raise a young person higher in the esteem of a parent, or to endear him more to a father's heart, than a humble submission to reproof, and an ingenuous confession of his fault. A friend of mine had a son, long since gone to join the immortals, who, having one day displeased his father before his younger brothers and sisters, not only meekly submitted to parental rebuke, but when the family were assembled at the dinner table, rose before them all, and after having confessed his fault and craved his father's forgiveness, admonished the junior branches of the family to take warning by his example, and be cautious never to distress their parents, whom they were under such obligations to love and respect. Nothing could be more lovely or more impressive than this noble act. He rose by his apology to a higher place in the regard and esteem of his parents and the family, than he occupied even before his fault. Sullenness, impertinence, and obstinate resistance, are meanness, cowardice, littleness, compared with such an action as this, which combines an heroic magnanimity with the profoundest humility.

Subjection requires also, a *due observance of the rules laid down for the maintenance of family order*. In every well ordered family, things are not left to



chance, but regulated by fixed laws; there is a time for every thing and every thing in its time; a place for every thing and every thing in its place. Meals, prayer, going to bed, and rising in the morning, are all in their appointed season. To these rules it is the obvious duty of every branch of the family to submit. The sons and daughters may be growing up, or arrived at full age; this matters not, they must submit to the law of the house, and their age is an additional reason for their submission, as it supposes a maturity of judgment, which enables them to perceive more clearly the grounds of all moral obligation. They may think the rules too strict; but if the parent has enacted them, they should be in subjection, and that as long as they continue members of the little community, though it be almost to old age. It is for the parents to decide also what *visitors* shall be brought to the house; and it is in the highest degree unbecoming for a child to introduce, or even wish or attempt to introduce, any companion contrary to the known will of a parent. The same remark will apply to *recreations*; parents must determine this point: and no child that has the proper feelings of a child, would desire to set up any amusements that the taste, and especially that the conscience of a father or mother forbids. Instances have occurred of young people inviting such friends, and joining with them in such diversions, in the absence of their parents, as they know to be decidedly contrary to the law of the house. This is such an act of base and wicked rebellion against parental authority, and such an unprincipled disregard to parental comfort, as language is too weak to characterize. Even the *books* which are brought into the house must be in accordance with the domestic rule. If the parent forbid the introduction of novels, romances, or any other books, a child in most cases should forego his own predilections, and yield to an authority which he cannot resist without opposing the institute of nature and religion.

##### 5. It is the duty of children to CONSULT THEIR PARENTS.

They are the guides of your youth, your natural counsellors, the family oracle, which you are ever to consult, and the responses of which are to be received with pious reverence. Even if you have just reason to suspect the solidity and penetration of their judgment, it is due to the relation in which you stand to them, to undertake nothing without laying the matter before them, and obtaining their opinion. How much more ready should you be to do this, where you have every reason to confide in their wisdom. You are young and inexperienced; the path of life is, in a considerable degree, untrdden by you, and contingencies are perpetually arising, which you have yet acquired no experience to understand, and to turn to account. They have travelled the road, and know its turnings, its dangers, and its difficulties. Go to your parents, then, with every affair; consult them on the subject of companions, books, recreations. Let a father's and a mother's ear be the receptacle of all your cares.—Have no secrets which you conceal from them.—Especially consult with them on the subjects of *trade* and *marriage*. On the former, you perhaps need their pecuniary assistance, and how can you expect this if you take not their advice, as to the best way of employing *their* property. As to marriage, I need not repeat at any length what I have already said on this subject. The Scripture has furnished us with many fine instances of the deference paid, in patriarchal times, by children to their parents.—Isaac and Jacob both appear to have left the selection of their wives to their parents. Ruth, though a daughter-in-law, was willing to be guided entirely by Naomi. Ishmael asked his mother's advice, and

Sampson moved for his parents' consent. The simplicity of that age has departed, and in the advance of society, more of the power of selection now vests in the children; but it should not be exercised independently of parental advice. An old divine said thus to his sons: "When you are youths, choose your callings, when men, choose your wives, only take me along with you: it may be, old men see farther than you." Another ancient writer has this remark: "It may be considered, that parents, who brought forth and bred up their children, should by no means be bereft of them without their consent; and since they are so much their goods and possessions, it were a kind of purloining to give themselves away without their parents' leave." And on this subject, a heathen may teach many who profess to be Christians; for Cyrus, on being invited to form a connection with a particular individual, replied, "I like the lady, her dowry, and family but I must have these agree with my parents' will, and then I will marry her."

##### 6. IMITATE THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF your parents.

I say *their good example*, for if they unhappily set you a *bad* one, it is at the peril of your soul that you follow it. It was a noble answer which Frederick IV., Elector Palatine of the Rhine, returned to the prince, who advised him to follow the example of his father Lewis:—"In the business of religion we must follow the example of parents and ancestors, only so far as they are agreeable to the will of God." Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, when he came to the throne of Imperial Rome, publicly expressed his determination not to follow the usual conduct of the Cæsars, but to act as a disciple of the pious Antonine, and to act, and speak, and think, as his foster father did. Survey the conduct of *your* parents; let their failings be thrown back in shadow, their excellences brought out in full relief. Where they are truly pious, be followers of their religious character. You bear the likeness of their bodies, receive also the impress of their minds. Seek to catch the family feature of their piety. A wicked child of godly parents, is the most awful character upon earth. With what horror do I look upon such an one! That *he* should swear, who was taught to pray! That *he* should violate the Sabbath, who was led up, from his infantine days, to the house of God! That *he* should despise religion, who has ever seen its beautiful form, in the example of a godly father, and a pious mother! That *he* should be a friend of profane and unclean persons, who from a child has been the companion of saints! Shocking spectacle! But even where there may be no actual irreligion, there is oftentimes a want of true religion: and this also, is distressing. What an aggravation is it to the sin of being without piety, to have lived all the earlier part of life, with an example of true godliness before our eyes! This is a dreadful and actual resistance of the most alluring means which heaven ever employs for the conversion of a sinner. It is a resolute determination to neglect and forget religion, in spite of an interesting and powerful memorial of it constantly before our eyes. What a meeting will such children have with their parents at the last day!

##### 7. The last duty I shall mention, is KINDNESS.

This should extend through the whole of your deportment, but there are several cases in which it will have a more enlarged opportunity for displaying its beauty, and exerting its energy.

When parents are *greatly inferior in talents and acquirements*, it is a fine occasion for the exercise of filial piety. We know instances in which the father and mother are lamentably deficient, not only in information, but in judgment: their weakness is manifest to all, and cannot be concealed from their family; by whom, indeed, the sad effects of their

imbecility, are daily felt and deplored. Here then is an opportunity for a display of noble and exalted kindness, on the part of children. Young people, if you are placed in such circumstances, endeavor constantly to remember, that notwithstanding all their weakness, they are your parents still, and hold a parent's claim. Never, never, taunt them with their defects, for this is cruelty in the extreme; but on the contrary, strive to the uttermost to prevent them from suffering any painful consciousness of their inferiority. Do not laugh at their mistakes, nor ever suffer yourselves so to expose or to correct them, as to wound their feelings. If they are obstinate, yield to them; if irritable, bear with them; and when they show their incapacity for governing with wisdom, instead of snatching the sceptre from their hand, insensibly assist them to wield it with greater propriety. It is a beautiful sight, to behold a fine, intelligent, strong-minded son or daughter, straining every nerve, and employing every faculty, to endure and conceal the faults of such a parent, and to throw an air of respectability over one, that has no respectability of his own.

"There is often, especially in the middle classes of life, as great a difference of mental culture in the parents and the child, as if they had lived at the distance of many centuries. The wealth that has been acquired by patient industry, or some fortunate adventure, may be employed in diffusing all the refinements of science and literature to the children of those to whom the very words, science and literature, are words of which they would scarcely be able, even with the help of a dictionary, to understand the meaning. In a rank of life still lower, there are not wanting many meritorious individuals, who, uninstructed themselves, labor indefatigably to obtain the means of liberal instruction for one, whose wisdom in after years, when he is to astonish the village, may gratify at once their ambition and love. It would indeed, be painful to think, that any one, whose superiority of knowledge has cost his parents so much fatigue, and so many privations of comforts, which, but for the expense of the means of his acquired superiority, they might have enjoyed, should turn against them, in his own mind, the acquisitions which were to them of so costly a purchase, despising them for the very ignorance which gave greater merit to their sacrifice, and proud of a wisdom far less noble, when it can thus feel contempt, than the humble ignorance which it despises."

Kindness will show itself in *generous attention to poor parents*. In the revolutions of this world, and by the vicissitudes of human affairs, many children have left their parents behind them in the humble vale of poverty: and some have lost their filial piety in the ascent. Few more shocking scenes can be presented to a feeling mind, than a rich son or daughter ashamed of, and unkind to, his poor father or mother. Such wretches deserve the fate of the proud monarch of Babylon, and would have no more than their desert if they were driven from the company of men to herd with beasts, to which they are more allied in disposition than to human beings. How beautiful a scene, the very opposite of that which I have just considered, was exhibited in the palace of Pharaoh, when Joseph, then the prime minister of the state, led in a poor old shepherd to the presence of the king, and before all the lords of the Egyptian court, introduced the decrepid and care worn pilgrim as his father. Who, after looking at this, will ever be ashamed of a parent because he is clad in the garb of poverty. What a halo of glory did that one act draw round the honored brow of Joseph: the lustre of the golden chain that hung from his neck was dim compared with the brightness of this action, and the chariot in which he rode with almost imperial pomp before the people, raised

him not to so high an eminence, as that which he occupied, when he stood before the monarch with the patriarch of Canaan leaning on his arm. Never be ashamed of your parents then, because of their poverty.

Let your kindness operate *in the way of affording them all things necessary for their comfort*. The author of the *Æneid* has denominated his hero the pious *Æneas*, because of the heroic manner in which he bore his decrepid father from the flames of Troy. Two inhabitants of Sicily obtained a celebrity in ancient story for their kindness to their aged parents in carrying them upon their shoulders from an eruption of Mount *Ætna*.

We have another instance of modern times. Mr. Robert Tillotson went up to London on a visit to his son, then Dean of Canterbury, and being in the dress of a plain countryman was insulted by one of the Dean's servants for inquiring if *John Tillotson* was at home. His person however, being described to the Dean, he immediately exclaimed, "It is my worthy father;" and running down to the door to receive him, he fell down upon his knees, in the presence of his servants, to ask his father's blessing.

And how has the poet, the historian and the painter, loved to exhibit that beautiful picture of filial piety, first given by Pliny, of a daughter, who, when her mother was condemned to be starved to death, obtained leave from the keeper to visit the prison daily, and there nourished her parent from her own breast. A similar occurrence took place afterwards, in which a daughter nourished her father in the same manner; the action was considered so striking, that it obtained the honorable appellation of *The Roman charity*. The senate decreed that the father should be restored to his child, and that on the spot where the prison stood, a temple should be erected to *FILIAL PIETY*.

There are however few instances of more touching kindness to parents, than that mentioned by Mr. Bruce in his *Juvenile Anecdotes*.

"An officer, having remained some time at Kingston, in Surrey, for the purpose of raising recruits, received orders to join his regiment. On the evening before his departure, a YOUNG MAN of the most engaging aspect made his appearance, and desired to be enlisted into his company. His air at once indicated a well cultivated mind, and commanded respect.

"He betrayed, however, evident marks of perturbation, and was greatly embarrassed; the officer asked the cause of it: 'I tremble,' said he, 'lest you should deny my request.' Whilst he was speaking, the tears rolled down his cheeks. 'No,' answered the officer, 'I accept your offer most heartily; but why should you imagine a refusal?' 'Because the bounty which I expect may perhaps be too high.'—'How much then do you demand?' said the officer. 'It is no unworthy motive, but an urgent claim that compels me to ask ten guineas; and I shall be the most miserable of mankind if you refuse me.' 'Ten guineas!' said the officer, 'that indeed is very high; but I am pleased with you: I trust to your honor for the discharge of your duty, and will strike the bargain at once. Here are ten guineas; to-morrow we depart.'

"The young man, overwhelmed with joy, begged permission to return home, to perform a sacred duty, and promised to be back within an hour. The officer, impressed by the honesty of his countenance, yielded to his desire; but observing something mysterious in his manner, he was induced, by curiosity, to follow him at some distance. He saw him hastening towards the town prison, where he knocked and was admitted. The officer quickened his pace: and when he came to the door of the prison, he overheard the young man say to the jailer: 'Here is the



money for which my father is imprisoned; I put it into your hands, and I request you will conduct me to him immediately that I may release him from his misery.' The jailer did as he requested.

"The officer delayed a few minutes, that the young man might have an opportunity of being alone with his father; he then followed him.—What a scene! he saw the son in the arms of a venerable and aged father, who, without uttering a word, pressed him to his heart, and bedewed him with tears. A few minutes passed before he observed the officer, who, deeply affected, approached them, and said to the old man, 'Compose yourself; I will not deprive you of so worthy a son. Permit me to restore him to you, that I may not regret the money which he has employed in so virtuous a manner.'

"The father and son fell upon their knees at his feet. The young man refused, at first, to accept of his proffered freedom; but the worthy officer insisted that he should remain with his father. He accompanied them both from the prison, and took his leave with the pleasing reflection of having contributed to the happiness of a worthy son and an unfortunate father."

What mind is not enamored, what heart is not affected, by such touching instances of filial kindness? And what child is not ready to exclaim, "O my father, my mother, I will share with you my last crust, and feel at once, both honored and happy, to return upon you in your old age, the kindness you bestowed upon me in my youth, my childhood and infancy."

Kindness will manifest itself by *affectionate attention and tender sympathy, in their sickness*. I do not know where in all our world, to find a lovelier, holier, sweeter scene, than that of a pious and affectionate daughter, devoting her time, and strength, and inventive assiduities to the comfort of a mother or a father, confined for years to the room and the bed of sickness. Such children I have known, and ineffably admired; who at an age when there is usually a taste and capacity for the pleasures of society, have abstracted themselves from all company, to be the constant, and almost sole companion of that dear sufferer, to alleviate whose sorrows, was their only happiness. Scarcely have they permitted themselves to walk abroad and enjoy the scenes of nature, even to recruit their wasting strength and prepare for fresh activities in the sick chamber, lest in their absence a pang should be felt which none could so well mitigate as they, or a want endured which they could best supply. I knew one such, who, had a sick father lived much longer, would have preceded him to the grave, and died a martyr to filial piety. Nothing could ever tempt her away from his side by day, and not often did a night pass without her stealing quietly to his chamber door, at which, unconscious of the frost which was assailing her delicate frame, she stood listening to ascertain if all was still, not daring to enter, lest she should disturb that slumber which perhaps he was enjoying. I remember in another case, visiting a cottage, in which a sick man lay dying, who had been long ill; his wife was ministering to his comfort, and in one corner of the room, there was a girl of twelve years of age busily employed at her needle. On my asking how they were supported in their affliction, the mother replied, "principally, sir, by that child's work; she is up every morning at four o'clock, and is diligently employed till late at night; she cheerfully bears all this labor, and gives its produce to sustain us." Young people, read and ponder these interesting details, and imitate these beautiful examples. Put forth all your tenderness, shrink from no self-denial, endure, not only without murmuring but with cheerfulness, any

sacrifices to comfort a sick parent. Aspire to the character of being a ministering angel to a father or mother. Let them see that you account it no hardship, but a felicity to wait upon them. It is in your power to alleviate or aggravate to an inconceivable degree their sufferings, according as you are kind or unkind. Covet the testimony which many a one has received, when the sufferer has said with tears in her eyes, "that dear child is my companion, my friend, my nurse, and all my earthly delight." O what is the concord of sweet sounds at the concert, what the gay and glittering attractions of the ball room, what the dazzling scenes of the theatre, or to come to more lawful enjoyments, what the exhilaration of the public meeting, compared with the consciousness of having smoothed the bed of sickness, and alleviated the sufferings of disease, for an afflicted parent. If the conscience of any that shall read these pages shall reproach them for neglect; if they know that they have heard their parents mildly reprove them for their want of sympathy, let them consider what must be the anguish of those parents' hearts, who have to say in the bitterness of their soul, to their own children, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, come see if there was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow," and who, disappointed in the hope of tenderness from their own offspring, turn for help to their neighbors; and taking up the piteous complaint of Job, say, "Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." Unfeeling youth, your neglect will one day find you out, and at some future time may be, perhaps, returned upon you, by the cruel conduct of your own children.

Kindness will often be put to a severe test, *by the bad temper or the stern and tyrannical government of parents*. It is difficult, I know, to be kind to those who are unkind to us: but it is our duty in all cases, much more to a parent. Nothing must allow you to be otherwise than the dutiful, affectionate child. No ebullitions of passion, no manifestation of unreasonable discontent, no caprice, no unmerited reproach on their part, should throw you off your guard. It may be sometimes necessary to remonstrate, but never can be proper to return railing for railing. Kindness may do more, in such circumstances, to soften and remove the evil, than angry resistance;—"A soft answer turneth away wrath."

"Lovely as virtue is," says Dr. Brown, "in all its forms, there is no form in which it is more lovely, than in this tender ministry of offices of kindness; where the kindness, perhaps, is scarcely felt, or considered less as kindness, than as the duty which might have been fairly demanded, and which there is no merit, therefore, in having paid. Though we have often the gratification of seeing, in the progress of life, many beautiful examples of age, that is not more venerable for its past virtues, than amiable, with a lasting and still increasing gentleness, which softens the veneration indeed, but augments it even while it softens it, it is not always that the last years of life present to us this delightful aspect; and when the temper is, in these last years, unfortunately clouded,—when there is no smile of kindness in the faded eye, that grows bright again for moments only when there is fretfulness in the heart,—when the voice that is feeble, only in the utterance of grateful regard, is still sometimes loud with tones of a very different expression,—the kindness, which, in its unremitting attention, never shows by a word or look, the sadness that is felt on these undeserved reproaches, and that regards them only as proofs of a weakness that requires still more to be comforted, is a kindness which virtue alone can inspire and animate, but which, in the bosom that is capable of it, virtue must already have well

rewarded. How delightful is the spectacle, when amid all the temptations of youth and beauty, we witness some gentle heart, that gives to the couch of the feeble, and perhaps, of the thankless and repining, those hours, which others find too short for the successive gaieties with which an evening can be filled, and that prefers to the smile of universal admiration, the single smile of enjoyment, which, after many vain efforts, has at last been kindled on one solitary cheek!

Another circumstance remains to be mentioned, which will render it extremely difficult, sometimes, to be at once obedient to God, and to your parent; difficult to manifest all the kindness which they may expect, and at the same time, to regard the dictates of conscience; I mean, where the children are pious, and the parents *are still in an unconverted state*. This is no uncommon case, and always a trying one wherever it occurs. Those who are placed in such a situation, need much wisdom and much grace to conduct themselves with propriety, so as to give no unnecessary pain to their parents, and yet at the same time, to maintain their consistency as Christians. To young persons in such circumstances, I say, let there be deep and unaffected humility, no spiritual pride, no apparent consciousness of moral superiority, no saying, "stand by, I am holier than thou;" nothing approaching in the most distant manner to contempt of your parents, on account of their state. When it is necessary, as it sometimes may be, to oppose their wishes, and refuse their requests, because they interfere with your duty to God, let your dissent not assume the shape of disobedience to them, let it be expressed in a mild and respectful manner, and be made obviously to appear to be the result of conscientious motives, and not of caprice, or any want of right feeling towards them. In all other things, in which religion is not concerned, let there be additional effort and ingenuity to please them, so that they may have nothing against you, but as touching the law of your God. It may be sometimes necessary for you to *express* the solicitude which you ought always to *feel* for their spiritual welfare; you must then be careful to avoid the appearance of dictation, lecturing, and reproach, and address yourselves to them in a humble and prudent manner. You should put suitable books in their way, and if they are not in the habit of hearing the gospel preached, you may invite them to hear the joyful sound.—With all this, you must take especial pains, that your own religion may be consistent and practical; visible in all your conduct, and more particularly conspicuous in the kind, and tender, and dutiful manner, in which you discharge your obligations to them.

Such is a compendium of filial duties. Let children read them, study them, sincerely desire to perform them, and pray to Almighty God for the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to assist them in discharging their obligations.

Many and cogent motives may be brought forward to enforce the performance of these duties.

*Observe the manner in which they are enjoined in Scripture.* Perhaps there are few branches of moral obligation, more frequently alluded to, or more variously enjoined, than that of filial piety. The lives of the patriarchs from the beginning of the world, are so drawn up, as to exhibit and recommend this virtue. It is commanded in one of the precepts of the moral law. By the Mosaic law, stubborn disobedience to parental authority, was punished with death. The book of Proverbs contains almost innumerable apothegms on this subject. The prophets very frequently allude to it; and Jeremiah, in the history of the Rechabites, has preserved a very extraordinary instance of heredi-

tary filial obedience, perpetuated through a period, which in the time of that prophet, had lasted three centuries, and which was rewarded by the following testimony and promise of the Lord:—"Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel; because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab, your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." If we come forward to the New Testament, we find it again and again brought into view. We see it embodied and enforced in the example of Christ; of whom it is said, Jesus went down and was subject unto his parents. Yes, in the matchless constellation of perfect moral excellences that formed his character, and are presented for our admiration and imitation, one bright and beauteous star is filial piety. Fix, young people, your eye upon that star, so mildly beaming, and so radiantly shining, as an example for you. That wonderful personage, God manifest in the flesh, was subject, we have reason to believe, to his parents, till at the age of thirty, he entered upon his public ministry; and those parents, be it remembered, were a poor but pious couple, who earned their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. With them he dwelt in their humble abode, and labored, in all probability, for their support. And even amidst the agonies of the cross, neither his own personal sufferings, nor the sublime and glorious scenes connected with the redemption of a world, abstracted his thoughts and solicitude from the mother of his human nature; and even then did filial piety shine forth, a bright speck still visible upon the orb of glory, which was rising upon the world. The apostles enforced it by various commendations. "Children, obey your parents," says Paul in one place, "*for it is right*;" a thing not obligatory merely because it is commanded, but commanded because it is right; not a mere positive institute, but wholly moral; a duty enjoined not only by revelation, but by reason; one of the first lessons taught by nature to a rational creature. So right and proper is it, that all nations, ancient and modern, civilized and savage, admit its obligations. In another place, it is declared to be "*well pleasing unto the Lord*." It is that in which he delights, because it is the very disposition towards himself which he requires. And then, in his catalogues of dark deeds, and horrid dispositions, and atrocious characters, the apostle places disobedience to parents. The loud, strong voice of revelation is lifted to proclaim over the surface of the globe, "Children obey your parents, and honor your father and mother; *for this is well pleasing to the Lord*;" while the voice of nature echoes back the command, "Children obey your parents, *for this is right*."

A child of any degree of generosity will be influenced to obey his parents, *by a consideration of their comfort*.

The earthly happiness of a father and a mother, depends far more upon the conduct of their children, than upon any thing else. Their trade may prosper, their wealth accumulate; they may dwell amidst every kind of luxury and splendor, in the most beautiful spot which creation can present, yet an undutiful child may, by his disobedience and unkindness, throw a dark and chilling shadow over all, and envelope every thing in gloom. On the other hand, affectionate and obedient children supply the lack of riches, soften the weight of care, sweeten the cup of affliction, and shed a pleasing light over what would be otherwise a dark and dreary scene of human woe. Children have their parents' happiness in their keeping. They stand at



the fountains of our earthly destiny, and send into our dwelling the waters of bitterness or of sweetness, as their conduct towards us shall be dutiful or unkind. They cannot know, till experience shall teach them, the trembling and exquisite sensitiveness of our hearts, and how slight a puncture draws the life's blood of our peace. So true is it, as was said by the wise man, that "a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother," ay, and of his father too; he is a spot on their character; a blast upon their hopes; a nuisance to their family; and a thorn in their hearts.

Nearly connected with this, as another motive, is *gratitude*. No child can know, till he becomes a parent himself, what he owes to his parents; and not then till he has added all the cares, and toils, and anxieties which are excited by the child, the boy, the youth, the man, in addition to those which are awakened by the *infant of days*. Parental solicitude is of course produced by the first sight of the child; but the infancy of the babe is but the infancy of our solicitude, which grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength. Children are ever contracting obligations from the first moment of their existence. What owes not the *babe* to his mother, for that watchfulness, and labor, and anxiety, which scarcely rest by day or sleep by night. Other animals, though nourished by their parents, are taught many things by instinct; but man, the most helpless of all creatures, must learn every thing from his parents, in the first stage of his existence. Let any one calculate, if he can, the hours of labor, sleeplessness, and anxiety; the tears, the tremblings, the alarms which one weakly infant costs a mother, before he leaves her arms, and stands erect upon his feet in his own strength. My young friend, had your mother remitted her care for one single hour, or ceased but for a short season, her vigilant inspection, you might have been consumed in your cradle, or have been now a cripple or an idiot. How many months rolled by, before you could wash away a speck of defilement from your frame, help yourself to medicine, or to food, express in articulate language a single want, put on a garment, or defend yourself against an enemy so feeble as a wasp. What then are your obligations to the woman who did all this for you, and delighted to do it? I cannot follow you through the successive stages of your existence, at each of which you were accumulating fresh obligations to both father and mother for education, with all its advantages; for instruction in trade, and that capacity you now possess for attaining to respectability in life; but above all for that ceaseless, and manifest, and earnest solicitude for your eternal happiness, by which you have had the road to glory, honor, and immortality, opened to your view, and have been admonished to walk in it! O, sum up, if you can, your obligations to your parents; but you cannot. And can you resist *this* motive to obedience? What, has gratitude perished in your soul, till its very root has died in the soil of your depraved nature? Yes; it must be so, if you are unkind to your parents: you stand proved before the universe, to have nothing of a child, but the name and the mere fleshly relation, which you possess in common with the tiger, or the serpent, or the toad, but you have not the feelings of a child; you are a kind of monstrous production, out of the course of nature, and like all such productions, fill the mind with loathing and horror. Few there are, I hope, that will read these pages, to whom such an expostulation is applicable; on the contrary, many I believe, will experience as they proceed, the generous emotions of gratitude swelling higher and higher in their bosom, till, with a burst of virtuous feeling, they exclaim, "Accept, my parents, of the

surrender, which a sense of my obligation to you compels me to make, of my whole future life, to the promotion of your comfort."

*Interest* pleads with children for their dutiful behavior to their parents.

An undutiful child cannot be a *happy* one. Peace must leave the breast with filial piety, whenever it departs; and uneasiness and misery, and occasional shame and remorse, enter to dwell in the wretched bosom; while the affectionate and dutiful child has a perpetual feast within. And mark the language of the apostle. "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." This is an allusion, it is true, to the temporal promises of the Sinai Covenant, and perhaps to the law which doomed the disobedient son to be judicially cut off from the people. But still, as repeated by a *New Testament* writer, it must, to a certain extent, be in force still. Dr. Dwight has the following remarks on this passage which deserve consideration. "In conversing with the plain people of this country, distinguished for their good sense, and careful observation of facts, I have found them, to a great extent firmly persuaded of the verification of this promise in our own times; and ready to produce a variety of proofs from cases, in which they have seen the blessing realized. *Their* opinion is *mine*, and with their experience my own has coincided.

"Indeed no small measure of prosperity seems ordinarily *interwoven* with a course of filial piety. The comfort which it ensures to parents, the harmony which it produces in the family, the peace which it yields in the conscience, are all essential ingredients of happiness. To these it adds the approbation of every beholder, the possession of a fair and lasting reputation, the confidence and good will of every worthy man, and of consequence an opportunity of easily gaining those useful employments which good men have to give. Beyond this it naturally associates itself with temperance, moderation, and sobriety, which furnish a solid foundation for health and long life. In my own apprehension, however, these are not *all* its blessings. I do not say that miracles are wrought for its reward. Neither will I say that purer gales breathe to preserve its health; nor that softer suns arise, or more timely rains descend to mature its harvests; nor that more propitious winds blow, to waft its ships home in safety. But I will say, that on the tide of Providence, multiplied blessings are borne into its possession, at seasons when they are unexpected, in ways unforeseen, and by means unprovided by its own forecast, which are often of high importance; which, altogether, constitute a rich proportion of prosperity; and which, usually are not found by persons of the contrary character. At the same time, those who act well as children, almost of course, act well as men and women; and thus have taken, without design, the scion of happiness from the parental stock, and grafted it upon other stems, which bear fruit abundantly to themselves. Here, in the language of Dr. Watts,

'It revives, and bears,  
A train of blessings for their heirs.'

If motives so forcible and tender as these, have no effect, nothing is left me to do, but to remind the children of disobedience, of that day of judgment, which God hath appointed to judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, and to give to every one according to the things done in the body, whether they are good or bad. "In that most awful season, when the wicked shall see the judge *sit above them*, angry, and severe, inexorable and terri-

ble; *under them* an intolerable hell; *within them* their consciences clamorous and diseased; *without them*, all the world on fire; *on the right hand*, those men glorified, whom they persecuted and despised; *on the left hand*, the devils accusing;" then shall it be found that the severest sentence of the Almighty, and the bitterest dregs of the vials of his wrath, will be poured out on the disobedient and ungodly child of those parents who trained him up in the nurture of the Lord.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE DUTIES OF MASTERS.

"Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your master also is in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him." EPHES. vi. 9.

"Masters give unto your servants, that which is just and equal." COL. iv. 1.

"A party of friends setting out together upon a journey, soon find it to be best for all sides, that while they are upon the road, one of the company should wait upon the rest, another ride forward to seek out lodging and entertainment; a third carry the portmanteau; a fourth take charge of the horses; a fifth bear the purse, conduct and direct the route; not forgetting, however, that as they were equal and independent when they set out, so they are all to return to a level again at their journey's end. The same regard and respect; the same forbearance, lenity, and reserve, in using their service; the same mildness in delivering commands; the same study to make their journey comfortable and pleasant, which he whose lot it was to direct the rest, would in common decency think himself bound to observe towards them, ought we to show towards those, who, in the casting of the parts of human society, happen to be placed within our power, or to depend upon us."

PALEY.

"There are duties which we owe to the lowest of those who serve us, that are not fulfilled by the most bountiful allotment of wages, and lodging, and sustenance. Of these duties, which are not duties of supererogation, but flow from the very nature of the bond which connects the master and the servant by reciprocal benefits, the surest rule is to be found in that brief direction which Seneca, in the spirit of the noble Christian precept of morals, has so happily given us in one of his epistles, in which he treats of the cruelty and contumely of Roman masters.—'So live with your inferior, as you would wish your superior to live with you.'"

DR. THOMAS BROWN.

"It has been justly remarked, that all authority over others, is in fact, a talent with which we are entrusted for their benefit, as well as our own; and so the discharge of our duty to them is only, in other words, securing our own interest as well as theirs. This, however, is especially manifest in the case of servants, dwelling under our roof, as members of the same family. Thereby how much our care over the souls of our servants contributes to their knowledge of God and themselves, so far have we secured their conscientious regard to our interests, and furnished them with principles, which will not only augment the stock of domestic happiness, but certainly contribute towards the divine favor resting on our dwelling, as well as on all we possess. Thus, then, is the fear of God in the master and servant, found to be at once the only foundation of relative duty, and the only effectual security for the discharge of it."

ANDERSON.

"The highest panegyric that private virtue can receive, is the praise of servants, for they see a man

without any restraint or rule of conduct, but such as he voluntarily prescribes to himself. And however vanity or insolence may look down with contempt on the suffrage of men undignified by wealth, and unenlightened by education, it very seldom happens that they commend or blame without justice.

"The danger of betraying our weakness to our servants, and the impossibility of concealing it from them, may be justly considered as one motive to a regular and irreproachable life. For no condition is more hurtful and despicable, than his who has put himself in the power of him, whom, perhaps, he has first corrupted, by making him subservient to his vices, and whose fidelity he therefore cannot enforce by any precepts of honesty or reason. From that fatal hour when he sacrificed his dignity to his passions, he is in perpetual dread of insolence or defamation; of a controller at home, or an accuser abroad." JOHNSON.

Of all the domestic connections, that between master and servant is perhaps least understood, or at any rate, most neglected. In the two preceding cases, nature, imperfect and corrupt as she is, has come in with her aid; but this is a connection, affecting very extensively the vital interest of the family, but which is left by God to conscience and Scripture alone. Should these two be neglected, what wonder, if the duty on either side is not fulfilled. It is not a connection founded in mutual love, like that of man and wife; nor in consanguinity, like that of parent and child, or brother and sister; but in mere convenience. It seems at first sight, a destruction of the natural equality of the human race, and an invasion by one party, of the rights of the other. It did not exist originally, but soon grew out of the natural course of things, such as the varied degrees of men's acquired property; the love of ease on the one hand, and the urgency of necessity on the other. It was wealth or power that made the first master, and want or weakness that made the first servant; and the very same circumstances which originated the relation, preserves it. No one is a servant by choice, but of necessity, and becomes a master as soon as he can. All this shows that there is great propriety and importance in stating with clearness, and enjoining with frequency, the duties of this connection; and that there needs great impartiality in adjusting the claims of both parties so as to prevent the master from becoming a tyrant, and the servant from becoming a rebel; in other words to guard the master against the disobedience and dishonesty of the servant, and the servant against the oppression and cruelty of the master.

To the right performance of the Duties of Masters and Mistresses, the following qualifications are necessary.

1. A correct view of the nature and design of the family compact, as intended to train up all the members that compose it, to be good members of the civil community, and of the church of Christ. They must keep in constant recollection, that the domestic constitution has a reference to religion, to heaven, and to eternity; and that they who are appointed to be the head of it, are accountable to God for the manner in which they give it this direction. Every household is intended to be a seminary for virtue and piety, of which the master and mistress are the teachers; the servants and children the pupils.

2. They should be partakers of true religion.

Hence you see they are directed to consider, that they have a master in heaven, and to perform their duties with a believing and constant reference to their accountability to Christ. Without personal religion, they cannot of course seek on behalf of their servants the highest end of the domestic constitution, i. e. their spiritual and eternal welfare. Nor can they, without



religion, be so well prepared to discharge even the ordinary duties of their station. True religion will not fail, wherever it exists in full vigor and operation, to teach a man in reference *to every thing*, the best rules and ends, and measures of action: and especially will the grace of God, in this case, prevent that pride, passion, cruelty, and unkindness, which make a man a bad master; and at the same time it will implant those virtues which are the germs of a master's greatest excellence. Religion is the strongest basis and the firmest support of authority; it not only renders all the commandments which are delivered, holy, and just, and good; not only infuses wisdom and equity into all the laws which are enjoined, but invests the lawgiver himself with the beauty of goodness and the awful power of sanctity. A peculiar awe and dread seem to have been upon the inferior creatures, for man in his innocence, as a kind of reverence for the divine image which man bore: and the more holiness there is in a man's character now, the more power is there in his authority, and the more nearly does he come back to his original dominion, at least over the rational creation. If we would govern well, and easily, and pleasantly, we must inspire reverence rather than fear, and nothing does this like religion. "Them that honor me, saith God, I will honor:" this is never more remarkably exemplified, than in the case of eminently holy masters and mistresses.

3. They should entertain correct notions of the nature and design of the relation they stand in to their servants, who are to be considered as their equals in nature, though their inferiors in rank; and not as beings of another and inferior race.

Servants are not mere speaking brutes, but rational men and women, who are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, and who on the ground of natural equality, covenant with you to deliver to you so much service, for so much wages. They are your equals in the eye of the laws of the land, and are as much protected as you are; equal in the eye of God, who is no respecter of persons; equal in personal formation, having the same corporeal senses, members and beauty, and the same mental faculties; equal in the church of God, being redeemed by the same blood of atonement, regenerated by the same Holy Spirit, and entitled to the same heaven; and on all these grounds entitled to the respect that is due to a man and a Christian: as such they are to be addressed and treated; and not spoken to and oppressed like beasts.

I now lay down one or two preliminary remarks.

1. Professing Christians should be very careful in the selection of their servants.

It is desirable, where it can be done, to engage such servants as are truly and consistently pious. I know that this cannot always be accomplished, in reference to the household, much less in the manufactory and the shop. In a business that depends upon the skill of the workmen, a master must have such as will suit his purpose, whether they possess moral qualifications or not. But when he cannot get good men, he should endeavor to reform, to the extent of his ability, such as are bad. It must be admitted that there are many, both men and women, who, as to their general qualifications, are most excellent servants, who yet do not possess true piety: they are industrious, good tempered, honest, and cleanly, and contribute far more to the comfort of the families that employ them, than some conceited, cross, and indolent professors of religion. Notwithstanding this, it is every way desirable to obtain, if we can, those to serve us, who, we have every reason to believe, serve the Lord Christ.

Other things being equal, pious servants are much to be preferred to those that are without the fear of God. They may bring the blessing of God with them into your house. You have the benefit of their example and of their prayers: in the time of sickness; you

have the consolation of their remarks as well as their sympathy: and hence they have been, in many cases, sources of inconceivable comfort to the households, in which they have been placed. If you have a family, how immensely important is this matter. Think of what incalculable mischief one unprincipled servant may be the author, in a circle of young children. On this account, if a person of decided piety cannot be found, at least determine that none but such as are strictly moral, shall be inmates of your habitation. David determined that no liar should dwell in his family. The utmost caution should be exercised, to keep from the *nursery* all improper persons. Nor ought any mother to trust her children too much to any servants, however excellent; and on admitting them, she should very minutely instruct them in all those points of conduct towards their minds, as well as to their bodies, which they are to avoid, as well as those which they are to observe. I would sooner take a toad into my bosom, said an old author, than a wicked servant into my family. Well might he say this, for the poor reptile is belied in being said to be armed with poison, but the wicked servant has poison for the mind both of her fellow servants and the children. Christian parents are not perhaps sufficiently cautious on this head. They are not sufficiently impressed with the importance of the subject, till they learn it by the various kinds of mischief that have been done. The present age has peculiar advantages on this point, inasmuch as by the extension of education, many young women, of considerable respectability, are trained for the important situation of nursery governesses.

2. When you engage a servant let there be a very explicit statement, of what each party expects from the other.

The master or mistress should most fully explain to the servant, all that will be demanded in the way of service, and all that will be given in the way of wages and of privilege, both temporal and spiritual. Nothing should be concealed or omitted, to be brought forward at some future time: this is in the highest degree dishonorable, and subjects the encroaching party to the justest reproach. It would be well for you to inform your servants, in a very minute and particular manner, all the religious habits of your family, and what compliance with these you will expect from them.

The duties of Masters and Mistresses may be classified under three heads.

First. You owe them a duty of JUSTICE.

This demands, that you should give them a fair remuneration for their labor. The amount should not only be enough to support them in mere existence, but in comfort. It is an utter disgrace to any man, much more to a professing Christian, to abate and screw down those whom he employs, till they cannot earn enough for their decent clothing, and the nourishment of their strength. Is not this to grind the faces of the poor? But, as in trade, there are certain rates of wages, from which it may be difficult for a master, however pious or humane, to vary, I shall merely remark, that such men ought never to be forward in lowering the price of labor, beyond what is actually necessary to keep possession of the market. As to household servants, to whom this chapter more especially applies, it is very dishonorable to a mistress to higgie about a few shillings, with a poor dependant creature, whom she is scarcely willing should earn enough to procure herself reputable apparel. I do not wish servants to be encouraged in dress, and in expensive habits: there is too great a propensity to this in many young women, which ought to be checked, and if it can be done by no other means, by a reduction of wages. But enough ought to be afforded in all cases, for suitable attire, and for a little surplus fund, which they should be encouraged to make against a time of

destitution and helplessness. If we do not furnish them by a sufficiency of wages, with the means of honestly supplying their wants, are we not tempting them to make up the deficiency by dishonesty? And of course, their wages should be regularly paid. It is disreputable to be long in debt to any one, but utterly scandalous, when such creditors are unpaid servants, who ask, without success, for what has been due to them for months. I wonder the pride, if not the principle of some people, does not prevent them from putting on new finery, while the servants in the kitchen are saying, "That bounnet and gown are mine, for I am owed the money which paid for them, if indeed they be paid for."

Justice demands that you should pay your servants for all the work they do; and that every thing, which in respect of time or labor, is above the stipulated or usual quantity of service rendered for a given sum, should be most equitably paid for. There are some persons who are proverbially mean, for exacting, not only what is actually due to them for the wages they pay, but for getting, if possible, a little extra service, without paying for it: this remark applies, of course, to the case of day work. If a woman be hired to work in the parlor, or the kitchen, or a man be engaged for the garden, such persons will generally detain them if they can, an hour or two beyond the usual time, on pretence, perhaps of finishing up the matter, or getting ready something of importance. This would be all very fair, if they paid an extra sum for the extra work; but no; they want the additional hour or two to be thrown in for nothing. But when the case is reversed, and the workman or woman is obliged to go away an hour or two earlier than the usual time, they are then forward enough to make a deduction from the amount paid to them. This is not only detestably mean but actually dishonest, for it is taking the laboring person's work without paying for it. Many persons, and some of them, professors of religion, have no conscience in this matter, and get a character for extortionate selfishness from all whom they employ. In our money transactions with those who serve us, we should always lean to the side of generosity, or at least, should pay to the uttermost farthing, for all the work which is done for us.

Justice requires, that your domestic servants be well provided for in all the necessities and accommodations of life. Their food should be wholesome and sufficient; their lodging should be such as is convenient for them in respect to warmth and protection, and not such as a person of even tolerable humanity would scarcely allot to the dogs of his flock. If people cannot really afford to give such wages as will procure decent attire, nor such food, both as to quantity and quality, as is necessary to keep up the strength of a servant, they ought not to have one, and should do the work themselves. I pity from the very bottom of my heart some poor orphans, hired perhaps, if not from the workhouse, yet from friends that are glad to get them off their hands at any price, who although burdened with excessive labor, are not allowed meat and drink sufficient to support their strength, and nourish their stunted frame, and are in a condition, which, with the single exception of liberty, is more pitiable than that of many African slaves. Medicine and surgical assistance, also should be procured for our domestic servants at our cost, as long as they are in our employ. I do not like the practice of hurrying them off, except in the case of contagious diseases, to hospitals and dispensaries, and thus calling upon the public to provide for the relief of those, whose cases belong to us. Much less is it equitable to make them pay the expenses of their own affliction. I have known servants, who were half beggared by doctors' bills, which ought to have been discharged by those, in whose service they contracted the ailments which reduced them to suffering and poverty.

Justice also equally demands, in the case of apprentices, that they should be well taught the business which they come to you to learn; especially, where as in many cases, a high premium is paid for this very purpose. No man can honestly retain such property, or indeed such apprentice with whom it is given, if he do not even take pains to instruct him. If there be any secret in the trade, it must be thrown open to him, for he comes to you for that very purpose. Nor is it enough not to hinder him from acquiring the business, but you must take pains to help him. I do think that this circumstance is very much forgotten by masters, not excepting those that make a profession of religion. Apprentices, I know, are taken with the primary view to the master's interest; but in return for the help which a servant affords towards the accomplishment of this object, a master covenants to instruct him in the trade, and the man who employs an apprentice in any thing else than that which he came to learn, and suffers him through his neglect, to remain ignorant of the trade, is guilty of a double act of robbery; he robs the parent of the youth of his property, and at the same time, robs the youth himself of all his future means and opportunities of success.

Justice demands, that when they leave your service, you should dismiss them, as far as you are able, consistently with truth, with a good character. Their character is their wealth, and if this be gone, their means of subsistence have all vanished. Do not disallow them the right of leaving you when they please, nor avenge yourselves upon them by insinuating any thing to their disadvantage. On the contrary, do all you can to raise their reputation, and say all the good you can in their favor.

"There is a carelessness and facility in 'giving characters,' as it is called," says Paley, "especially when given in writing, or according to some established form, which, to speak plainly of it, is a cheat upon those who accept them." They are given with so little reserve and veracity, "that I should as soon depend, (says the author of the Rambler,) upon an acquittal at the Old Bailey by way of recommendation of a servant's honesty, as upon one of these 'characters.'" It is sometimes carelessness; and sometimes to get rid of a bad servant, without the uneasiness of a dispute; for which nothing can be pleaded, but the most ungenerous of all excuses, that the person whom we deceive is a stranger.

There is a conduct the reverse of this, but more injurious, because the injury falls where there is no remedy; I mean the obstructing of a servant's advancement, because you are unwilling to spare his service. To stand in the way of your servant's interest, is a poor return for his fidelity, and affords slender encouragement for good behavior, in this numerous, and therefore, important part of the community. It is a piece of injustice, which, if practised towards an equal, the law of honor would lay hold of; as it is, it is neither uncommon, nor disreputable.

It is but common justice, also, to do something for the provision of servants who have worn themselves out in your service. To leave such to penury and want in the wintry season of their old age, is an instance of great and disgraceful cruelty. How much have they contributed either to your wealth or to your comfort, and perhaps to both. By the Levitical law it was provided that the servant who had been six years in the employ of a master should be treated with great generosity. "He shall not," said the Lord, "be sent empty away; but thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, out of thy floor, and out of thy wine press; and that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him." (Deut. xv. 13, 14.) Now if six years' service, under the law, were considered to entitle a servant to such an acknowledgment, surely a whole life's labor under the gospel dispensation, en-



titles them in their old age to no less. I ask this, not on the ground of kindness, but of justice; for it partakes of oppression and extortion, to give them no more for their time and strength than they need for the passing moment, and then to cast them upon the parish, when we can no longer render them subservient to our interests.

*Secondly.* KINDNESS comprehends another extensive class of duties owed by masters and mistresses to their servants.

*You must be careful not to overwork them.*

A merciful man will not overload his beast. We have been often shocked to see in our streets, or on the public road, how cruelly some weak, half-starved animals have been used, in being compelled to drag along burthens much beyond their strength: but are there not scenes of equal cruelty, to be witnessed in some houses, where is to be found a poor, young, friendless girl, whose pallid looks and delicate frame indicate, to every one, but her hard hearted mistress, that she is incompetent to the tasks, which, without cessation, she is mercilessly compelled to sustain? Her toil commences, perhaps, at five or six o'clock in the morning, and continues without intermission till evening at night. Of work, she has too much for the robust and well nourished frame, especially for her weak and ill fed constitution. Some unfeeling creatures seem to think that the payment of five or six pounds a year, gives them a right to exhaust all the energies of the poor helpless creatures who are unfortunate enough to be employed by them. And even where unkindness is not carried to this extent, I am persuaded, that servants are in very many cases, quite overworked; they are so urged by incessant demands for their labor, that from the beginning to the end of the week, they have scarcely a moment to keep their own clothing in proper repair, much less to attend to the concerns of their souls; their employers seem to think, that every moment they sit down, is so much time stolen from them. Are there any *professing Christians*, who act thus! Yes; and in so far they are a disgrace to the Christian name.

*Your method of addressing them, while it accords with your station, and partakes of the dignity of superiority, should be as remote from bitterness and contemptuous pride, as it is from familiarity.* Do not speak to them as if they were a race of inferior creatures, whom it almost demeaned you to notice. There are some masters and mistresses, who, though they do not swear, or storm, or call reproachful names, yet have a method of addressing their servants, which they would scarcely use to a brute animal. I have myself heard tones, and seen looks, which the authors of them would not, and did not give to their dogs. Servants are not stocks and stones, but men and women; and how galling to their feelings, how insulting to their rank as rational creatures, must it be to be addressed as a reptile race, who were scarcely entitled to the most common civilities. And as *pride* is improper, so is *passion*. Masters are commanded to "forbear threatening." This is particularly specified, because there is a great proneness to this in many, if not in most persons. When an inferior displeases us, the temptation to undue sallies of wrath, gusts of passion, and threatening words is peculiarly strong. The individual is so much below us, and in our power, that let us say what we will, we have nothing to fear in return. But how mean, and cowardly, and execrable is it, to say nothing of the wickedness of such conduct, for any one to hector, and bully, and threaten a poor, defenceless creature, because we have no need to apprehend any thing in the way of revenge. We must, as Christians, not only be meek, and gentle, and patient, but be gentle towards all, to those who are *below* us, as well as to those who are above us. Occasions, will of course, often present themselves, when it will be necessary to

find fault, and to *express* displeasure; but this should never be done in a passion. A Fury never can be respectable; we never go into a rage without disgracing ourselves in the eyes of our servants: at such times we may be terrible, but we cannot be reputable. Abusive epithets and ill names lower our dignity, and undermine our authority. Mild firmness, rational expostulation, and meek reproof, will do far more both in the way of punishing faults, and of reforming them, than petulance and passion. Speak kindly to them, then, at all times. Let your words, and even your tones, partake of a dignified courtesy, blending and softening authority with good will. At the same time, *avoid all familiarity*, and do not encourage an obtrusive and encroaching boldness. You must keep them in their place, and in order to this, you must keep *yours*. Do nothing to remove the line of demarcation between you, nor encourage them to step over it. You must not joke with them, nor make yourselves merry with them; you must not enter into gossip with them about the floating occurrences of the neighborhood, nor encourage them to bring you tales, nor employ them as your purveyors of scandal. Some persons, who would not run the risk of being thought busy bodies themselves, scruple not to encourage their servants to bring them all the news of the town. All this is mischievous in the highest degree, and tends to degrade those who are foolish enough to indulge in it, in the eyes of those who should be taught to respect them.

*You should manifest an unvarying regard for their comfort.* Take a deep interest in their welfare, and make it clear to them that you wish to see them happy. Watch over their health, tenderly inquire into the cause of their ailments, and by mitigating their labor, and procuring them medical assistance, do all you can for their recovery. Advise them for their good, and refuse not your counsel whenever it can be of service to them. Convince them by the whole of your conduct, that you are their real friends, and truly anxious to make them happy and respectable.

*Bear with patience those lesser infirmities which may comport with substantial excellences.* Do not be strict to mark, at least with severity, their more trivial faults. Some mistresses render their servants miserable by incessant complaint: they are such slaves to excessive neatness, that they are always in bondage themselves, and make every body miserable around them. No one can please them; a speck of dust, or a drop of rain blown in through the window upon the furniture, is sure to bring a cross look or word upon the poor, wretched house-maid, who was no more to blame than her mistress.

Kindness to servants, would lead us, to administer commendation as often as possible, and censure with as much lenity, as a due regard to justice will allow.

"There is a certain moral pleasure which we particularly owe them. They may do well, and in doing well, they have the same title to our praise, which our best actions have to the glory with which we expect the world to be ready to reward us. If we withhold the approbation which is due, we take from them one powerful incentive to continuance of that species of conduct which rendered them worthy of approbation; and at the same time, we take from them one of the most delightful feelings of which he who has sold his freedom is still capable—the feeling that he has done something, which was not actually sold with the very labor of his hands—that in the additional duties performed by him, he has been free still, and that our praise is something, which, as it was not an actual condition, like the livery and the daily bread, is an offering to his own gratuitous virtue. The duty of approbation, then, when approbation is due, is another of the duties which the master owes to the servant; and a duty which, though he may legally withhold it, he is not entitled morally to withhold.

"But servants share not our love of praise only, but passions of a less commendable kind. They are assailed by temptations, like those which assail us; and they sometimes fall, as we too fall. They neglect to do what we have desired; and they often do what is positively injurious to us. In such cases, they might deserve all our severity of punishment, if we were not men, and they were not men. Our reproof they unquestionably deserve, not merely because they have failed in their part of our mutual compact, but also, because our reproof may, even to them, be attended with moral advantage. Yet though our reproof of any gross inattention is not excusable only, but, if we consider all its consequences, an act of humanity, it is not to be the reproof of one who seems almost pleased with the offence itself, in the eagerness which is shown to reprehend it. In censuring, we are silently to have in mind the human weaknesses of our own moral nature; and to remember, that if even we, with better light, and nobler recreations, err, the ignorant, who by their very ignorance, are incapable of seeing many of the consequences of actions, and who have few recreations, but those which seduce them from what is good, may still more naturally be imagined to err. In condemning them, therefore, we condemn ourselves; or we declare that we are frail creatures, of whom less knowledge and less virtue are to be expected than from them. There are beings with gentle voices, and still gentler eyes, and with smiles that seem never to be willed, and scarcely even to fade and brighten again, but to be almost the native character of the countenance, like the very lustre that is ever blooming on the lip and on the cheek;—there are beings who seem to exist thus only in a perpetual moral atmosphere of radiance and serenity, that on the sight of a single particle of dust on a book, or a table, or a chair, as if in that particle, a whole mountain of misery were before them, can assume in an instant, all the frowns and thunders of all the furies; whose delicate frame is too weak to bear the violent opening of a door, but not too weak, after the door is opened, to shake the very floor with the violence of their own wrath on the unfortunate opener of it."<sup>79</sup>

Kindness should lead us to *allow our servants all possible indulgences and recreations that are not incompatible with religion.*

They are capable of gratification like ourselves, and have the same desire of it; while at the same time, are denied by their very circumstances access to many of those sources of delight which are continually open to us. Those who seem to grudge domestic servants an occasional remission of their labor, that they may have communion with others at the feast of innocent enjoyment, convert their service into slavery, and render the oppression additionally bitter by the circumstance, that it is exercised in the land of freemen. I have often been delighted to see the cheerful faces of female servants at those meetings which are convened for promoting the various objects connected with the cause of religion and humanity, and who seemed to drink in the streams of eloquence and piety, with as eager a thirst, and as exquisite an enjoyment, as their more enlightened and better educated masters and mistresses. And I have known those, who, when going to some neighboring town or village, to attend, perhaps, a religious service of a public nature, have placed a female servant on the box seat of the carriage that conveyed them, that she might share the pleasures of the day. It is our duty, of course, to keep them from all polluting and vitiating amusements, but it is not less a duty of benevolence, to give them as often as is convenient to us, and consistent with

their interests, an opportunity of enjoying the liberty and sunshine of innocent and holy pleasure.

*It is no credit, but very much otherwise, to any family, to be always changing their servants.* Some persons have as many as there are months in the year. Their place has acquired so bad a reputation, that no good servant will offer herself for it. It is astonishing how extensively the character of every household is known amongst persons of this description. Those who keep register offices can tell, perhaps, the repute in which most of the families in a town are held, for oftentimes upon mentioning a house to one who has applied for a place of service, they receive some such reply as this:—"I will not offer myself there, for I shall not be kept above a month or two if I go." This is not to the honor of any one, much less to the professor of religion: for, as those who leave the place, are naturally enough anxious to justify themselves to their friends, they scruple not to tell all the faults of the mistress, and oftentimes, of course, with great exaggeration, and thus the credit of religion suffers. Besides, what a risk is it, where there are children, to be always receiving fresh servants into the family; and what an interruption also to domestic comfort. Avoid then, unnecessary changes, and every thing that leads to them, whether it be bad temper, inflicting excessive labor, or striving after unattainable perfection.

A kind master or mistress *will prevent their servants from being INSULTED OR OPPRESSED BY THE CHILDREN.* It is really affecting to see what cruel scorn and impertinence are, in some families, allowed to be practised towards respectable men and women, by those little tyrant masters and misses, whose weak parents never allow them to be opposed in any thing. They may utter the grossest falsehoods, indulge in the most wanton and distressing vexation, vent the most scurrilous abuse, and utter the foulest epithets against the servants, and their pitiless and unjust mother or father, with the full knowledge of the fact, allow this cruel insolence to continue. Children ought not to be permitted in any kind or degree to be guilty of such impropriety as this. They should be kept from being familiar, but equally so from being impertinent. I would never allow a servant to strike children, nor to be struck or in any way oppressed by them.

*Peculiar attention, partaking at once of respect and kindness, should be shown to those who have served us LONG AND FAITHFULLY.* "Reckon," says Mr. Janeway, "that one has been a faithful servant to you seven years, deserves to be esteemed next to a child ever after." Tried fidelity should be marked with peculiar approbation. At the end of each seven years of faithful service you should present them with some substantial present, as a token of your respect and gratitude, and the present should increase in value at the close of each septennial period. Where there is wealth to be disposed of by will, I think that aged and valuable servants should be remembered. Think how much you owe to their faithfulness, how long your property has been in their power, which they have neither embezzled nor wasted, how constantly you have been served by them, how much they have contributed to your domestic comfort, perhaps to your success. You owe them not only wages but esteem.

*Thirdly.* But there are duties of a still higher and more sacred character, owed by you to your servants, I mean those of RELIGION.

They have souls, as well as you; like you, are immortal creatures; like you, are sinners; and like you, the objects of redeeming mercy. The very circumstance of their being brought within the comprehension of your domestic circle, has made them a part of that little community, the spiritual welfare of which, you are to promote and to watch, with all possible solicitude. They are members of the domestic consti-

\* Dr. Brown's Lectures.



tution, as well as hired servants. We surely cannot suppose, that the fine and extensive power, which is lodged by the family compact in the master's hand, was vested there for so trivial a purpose as the mere payment of those wages and the affording of that sustenance, which are necessary for supplying the servant's bodily wants. It is also to be recollected, that moral duties are required from servants, and ought therefore to be taught. With what propriety can we look for truth, honesty, temperance, chastity, if we have never inculcated these virtues. How can we expect they will be faithful in serving us, if we have never taught them to *serve God* in sincerity and truth?

1. Our first care must be not to *oppose their religion*, or to *hinder their salvation*. We may do this by the influence of a bad example. In what a heathenish state do some families live! Heathenish! No—for pagans have their household deities, and make some snow of religion, though it be a false one, in their houses; but great multitudes in this Christian land, live as if there were no God, and are, to all intents and purposes, practical atheists. There is no family prayer, no reading of the Scriptures, no observance of the Sabbath, no regular attendance upon public worship. The holy day of rest is to them, as other days; they keep the same company, and seek the same recreations then as at any time besides. Religion is rarely introduced, but to be an object of contempt, and a source of ridicule. The servants in such families hear swearing, perhaps, but no prayer; see drunkenness, but no worship; witness card playing, dancing, and conviviality, but no acknowledgment of God. How can such masters expect good servants? If they habitually break *God's* commands, how can they expect their servants to keep theirs? Unreasonable men, can you look for sobriety in them, if you set them the example of intoxication? For chastity, if you teach them lewdness? For truth, if you teach them falsehood? For religion, if you teach them irreligion? O that you would consider that your wickedness ensures not only your own damnation, but hazards that of all the persons under your charge. Is it not enough to have your own sins laid to your charge, but that you must be answerable for your servants' sins also? Is one curse too light, but you must seek to multiply it? Are the flames of hell so cool and tolerable, that you are busy in adding fuel to that terrible fire, to make it burn seven times hotter? Yours will not be the privilege of perishing alone, but will be the fate of the pilot who sinks others with himself.

Some carry the matter so far, as to *hinder the salvation* of others, not only *by example*, but by *DIRECT TEMPTATION*. How many masters have by their atrocious and murderous arts, corrupted the virtue, blasted the reputation, and ruined the souls of those females, whom, having received into their house, they were bound, by every principle of honor, as well as of religion, to protect. Such wretches deserve the gallows far more than many who suffer there. How many poor, unhappy women, have been sent, by such vile transgressors, into the career of prostitution, to an early grave, and to that place of punishment, where they will meet their seducer to be his tormentor, through eternity.—Neither a word, nor a look, should ever be given to a servant, which has the remotest tendency to injure her modesty.

Nor ought you to tempt them to sin, *by employing them to practise dishonesty and falsehood in the way of trade*. Do not engage them in acts of fraud upon the revenue; nor make them the spectators of your own evasion of the laws which regulate the taxes; for all such conduct as this, is laying a snare in their way, and tempting them to sin. And by what sophistry can any one attempt to justify that wicked practice of

*commanding their servants to say to visitors that they are not at home, while they are in the house at the every time?* This is teaching falsehood by system, and ought we to wonder if our servants should lie to us, when we have thus taught them to lie for us? People that make any profession of religion, cannot, of course, adopt this iniquitous custom, for it disgraces the most general acknowledgment of piety; but it is to be feared that some, who pass for real Christians, and wish to be thought such, are guilty of many things which are quite unworthy of their character, in reference to their servants, either by making them the witnesses or instruments of many evasions, artifices, and dishonorable acts; and by which they really tempt them to go much farther astray on their own account. We can easily conceive with what insufferable loathing and disgust some such servants must come to the domestic altar at the time of the morning or evening sacrifice. It is a most shocking instance of hypocrisy when a master says to his servants, "After you have done so and so"—alluding to some act of imposition upon others—"come to prayer." "Come to prayer," one might imagine they reply, "thou hypocrite, what to sanctify the dishonesty thou hast just commanded us to perform?" Many who have witnessed these things, or any thing like them, have taken an inveterate prejudice against religion, by concluding that all its professors are alike, and that all are hypocrites together.

We *hinder their salvation, when we keep them away from the means of grace*. Their work should not be so oppressive, even on week days, as to allow them no time for reading the Scriptures and prayer; but to compel them to spend even their Sabbaths in such a manner as to deprive them of an opportunity to hear the word of God explained and enforced by the faithful preaching of the gospel, is to place a most powerful hindrance in the way of their salvation. How exceedingly cruel and disgraceful is it to keep them from public worship to dress a warm dinner. Without affirming that the Christian Sabbath is to be observed with the same ceremonial strictness as the Jewish Sabbath was, we do contend that no *unnecessary* work should be done on that day in our dwellings. I suppose no one will contend that a *warm* dinner is necessary. Is it not a crime, then, against the spiritual welfare of our servants, as well as against God, to occupy *their* Sabbath in preparing for our luxurious gratification? Even as it respects their bodies, it is an act of great oppression, for *they* must need rest from their labor, far more than we do; and as it respects their souls, it takes away both the opportunity and the inclination to attend to these: it occupies their time in the morning, and unfits them for attention in the afternoon. All who thus employ their domestics on the Sabbath, may be truly said to feast upon their servants' birth-right, and to gratify *their* palate at the expense of their fellow creatures' spiritual and eternal welfare. How long and how loudly shall the voice of indignant and faithful reprobation be raised in vain against this sinful practice? I put it to any professing Christian's conscience, how he can any longer determine thus to hinder the salvation of those who are under his care? Will he not make even *this* small sacrifice for the spiritual welfare of the members of his domestic constitution? Is *this* his professed zeal for God, and compassion for souls? But, perhaps, he will reply, somebody must be at home to guard the house. Be it so. But need they be slavishly occupied in the drudgery of cookery? If they must be deprived of the *public* means of grace, is it necessary that they should be deprived of those that are private also? But they will not improve their time at home. How do you know? Have you tried them? Have you, before you left home, furnished them with a suitable portion of reading?

In some families the servants are kept away from the house of God far more than they need to be, for other purposes besides cooking. If there are two children, one must be detained from public worship for each, and perhaps a third to guard the house. But is this necessary? I would have all proper care taken, both of the children, and of the property; but then I would not have more servants than are absolutely requisite, kept away from the house of God. The Sabbath is of more importance to them than it is even to us. Their incessant occupation through the week, renders it more necessary for them to have a day of rest and of leisure to attend to their soul's concerns, than it is for us. Nor do I think it enough to grant them merely the afternoon of the Lord's day: for that is the very part of the Sabbath, which we find to be the least edifying to ourselves, and if this be the case with us, how much more so must it be with them? If, then, we keep away our servants from suitable public means of grace, we are placing a hindrance in the way of their salvation; for we know that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" and that God hath ordained the *preaching* of the gospel for the salvation of men's souls.

It appears to me, that we tempt our servants to sin also, by *improper negligence and carelessness about many of the more covetable parts of our property*. Some persons are too much away from home, and leave their servants too much to themselves: and when they are idle abroad, is it any wonder that their domestics should be dishonest at home? If they will gossip away their time by hours, and days, and weeks together, can it be wondered at, that their property should be wasted by those who are only *hired* to watch it? If you are so much from home, is it not a temptation to them to invite company? Is this habit of neglecting them the way to make them faithful? Will they not learn idleness from you, and do you not know that idleness is a parent of sin? Or if you tempt them not to sin by being too much from home, do you not do it by giving them *too little employment*? If you overwork them, you oppress their bodies; if you underwork them, you endanger their souls. It is said of the wise and virtuous woman, that she would suffer none of her household to eat the bread of idleness. You must account, not only for your own time, but for theirs also. When your servants are idle, said an old author, the devil is at work; and our idle days are his busy ones; if you find them nothing to do, he will. Many have been ruined for both worlds, by having nothing to do—but mischief. Do not tempt them to sin, by *never calling them to account* for what is entrusted to their care; especially in pecuniary matters. They may be honest; then keep them so, and put no temptation in their way to be otherwise, by not examining their accounts. Never let them feel that they are irresponsible. If you keep not your eye upon them you may find a thief, where you expected to find an honest man. It is your prayer for yourself, "lead me not into temptation;" act upon this same principle towards them. Honesty itself should always be required to account for the uttermost farthing, and will wish to do it. Do not leave your property too much exposed. Some go to one extreme, and lock up every thing, others go to the opposite extreme, and lock up nothing; and here, as in many other cases, extremes meet; for one tempts to dishonesty by trusting too little, the other by trusting too much. Money, drinkables, and the lighter articles of female dress and decoration, should not be left too carelessly about. Nor should one party in married life, ever make a confederacy with servants to deceive the other. Wives should never engage their maids in a scheme of falsehood, imposition, or concealment of any kind against their husbands, though it be but in trifling matters, for this is teaching them intrigue and duplicity, which may not only be

injurious to their own character, but seriously detrimental in the end to the interests of the family. If a servant be employed by the wife to assist her to conceal any part of the husband's property, or appropriate it any way unknown to him, she is in that act tempted by her mistress, so far as the influence of example goes, to take the same liberty on her own account for she who is employed to purloin for another, will soon feel no scruples to steal for herself.

2. It is our duty, not only not to *hinder* the salvation of our servants, but to *do every thing in our power to promote it*.

Seriously consider your obligation in this particular, and that as God sent them under your roof, that you might care for their souls so HE WILL REQUIRE THEIR SOULS AT YOUR HANDS. Yes, at the day of judgment he will say to you, "Give an account of those immortal beings which were placed under your instruction, inspection, and anxiety." Cherish, then, I entreat you, a deep solicitude for their spiritual welfare, and feel desirous to become the instruments of their salvation. In order to this, take care to set them a good example, and let them see in you, not only nothing that is contrary to religion, but every thing that can recommend it, that so an attractive influence may ever be exerted by your character on theirs. Many have learnt more of religion by what they have seen in their masters and mistresses, than by all they have heard from their ministers. They will never forget their example. Call them regularly to family prayer, and make them the peculiar subjects of your earnest supplications, that they may hear your entreaties with God on their account, and be the witnesses of your solicitude for their welfare. See to it that they have bibles, and take care that they are able to read, for if this be not the case, it is your bounden duty to teach them. Furnish them with a few well selected books, and thus provide for them a kitchen library. Give them opportunities to attend public worship, and to keep holy the Sabbath day. Keep them not too late at work on Saturday evening, lest their worldly business trench upon the Sabbath, or unfit them, by excessive fatigue, for its hallowed occupations. Instruct them in the principles of true religion, that they may have their judgments rightly informed, and that they may not perish for lack of knowledge. It is a great disgrace to a Christian master or mistress, if any servants leave their house, without knowing, at least in theory, the way of salvation. In addition to this, you should talk to them in the most affectionate manner on their soul's concerns, warning them to flee from the wrath to come, and directing them to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Give them no rest till you have prevailed upon them to seek in good earnest, the one thing needful. Observe what company they keep, and caution them against such as would lead them astray. Acquaint yourselves with the books they read, and examine what they understand and remember of the sermons they hear. Do all you can to convince them of the reasonableness, profit, and sweetness of true religion, and of the folly, and danger, and misery of living without it. If you see no fruit of your exertions at first, do not be weary of well doing, but persevere in your anxious and judicious efforts. Should you notice any solicitude about their souls, nourish to the uttermost their impressions, by giving suitable advice and proper books. Encourage them, when you are convinced of their true conversion, to connect themselves with the church of Christ, and thus to make a public profession of religion. O, if you should be the instrument of saving the souls of your servants, what an honor and a happiness will be conferred upon you! How many *have been* so honored; and in what bonds have their servants been held to them for ever after in this life.



To influence you to the performance of these duties, I may call upon you, to remember that your Master also is in heaven, and to consider what a master he is to you. Meditate upon his attributes, and upon the manner in which they are manifested in all his conduct towards you. How righteous, how faithful, how holy, how true, how merciful is he in his dealings towards his servants. And it is your duty to be like him. When in danger of acting improperly, either by want of equity or kindness, O think of God; meditate on his matchless grace, and surely such a reflection will be an immediate check to every kind, and every degree of impropriety. To him also you are accountable, and accountable, as for your conduct in general, so also for your behavior to your servants. Prepare to meet Him in that awful day, and to meet them also at his bar!!

Consider how much your servants need this kind interposition for their welfare. They are often young, inexperienced, and ignorant; rash, and imprudent; and they are also an unprotected and dependant race. I know not a class of persons whose situation is more calculated to awaken our tenderest sympathies, than domestic female servants. Many of them are orphans, and have no friend in the world beyond their employers; and no home but what they find in their master's house. When they leave one place of service, they often know not where to find their next home, and are thus repeatedly beginning the world, and setting out on the journey of life afresh. How many dangers are they exposed to! How many snares are laid for their feet! Masters and mistresses, be kind to them, they have found a refuge in your house, and let them find friends in you. Pity their condition, and labor to the uttermost for their welfare. You may be the means of blessing them for both worlds, and become their spiritual fathers and mothers, as well as their temporal masters and mistresses. Their souls may be given to your kind solicitude, to be your crown of rejoicing in the day of eternity.

The honor of religion is most deeply involved in the way in which you discharge your duties. Bad masters and mistresses bring great dishonor upon Christianity; while on the other hand, they who in this situation, exhibit whatsoever things are pure, and true, and honest, and just, and lovely, and of good report; who abound in that love which is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil, and is kind; who have the meekness and gentleness of Christ; and who put on bowels of mercy, are bright ornaments of their profession, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. A good master or mistress is indeed a most honorable character—good men esteem it, bad men admire it, the world values it, the church applauds it, angels delight in it, and God commends and rewards it. Eyes too dim to see the beauties of holiness in the abstract, discern the excellence of this, and tongues that never speak of religion generally, but to scoff at it, are eloquent in the praise of this. I conjure you, then, by all the regard you bear to the honor of religion, strive to excel in this your appropriate duty.

Interest pleads with you for this. Consider how much your own happiness will be promoted, by seeing others happy around you. The heart of that man cannot be in the state in which it ought to be, who is not pleased to see around him in his dwelling, a circle of happy minds and smiling countenances. A good master, or a kind mistress, is a kind of central luminary in the domestic system, and every child and every servant an attendant satellite, revolving in the force of his attraction, and reflecting the brightness of his glory. Or to change the metaphor, he is a fountain of gladness, continually sending forth in kindness and kind actions, streams of pleasure to all that are in the house. And then good masters and mistresses make good servants, or find them. When I hear persons

complain, that they cannot find good servants, I suspect the fault is their own, and that they have a bad character, for their conduct towards their domestics. If they are tormented, have they not been tormentors? If they can get no one to serve them willingly, and honestly, have they been generous and kind? If they find none but such as are wicked, have they tried to make them holy? If they complain of their lying, their lewdness, their theft, have they not been so selfish as to seek to produce right dispositions towards themselves, without endeavoring to found these dispositions on a right state of mind towards God? Try, then, to conduct yourselves rightly to those, whom you have so much interest in making what they should be. Body, soul, estate, wife, children, character, comfort, all are more or less concerned in this matter. Your servants may rob or enrich you; may defend your reputation or blast it; may corrupt your children, or improve them; may tempt you to sin, or warn you against it; may injure your health or protect it; may bless you by their prayers, or curse you by their vices; may render your dwelling continually pleasant, or perpetually miserable: your own interest, therefore, unites with God's commands, to make it your wisdom and your duty, to train your servants as well as your children in the fear of the Lord.

"What have you to say against what I have been persuading you to? Will you not now, without delay, bewail your former neglect, and in good earnest set to your work, like persons that in some measure, know the power of divine precepts, the worth of souls, and the greatness of the charge that lieth upon you? O that there were in you such a heart. O that all masters of families were resolved for that which humanity, reason, interest, reputation, and their comfort call for, as well as the law of God, and men oblige them to. What blessed families then should we have! What noble corporations! What glorious cities! Might not HOLINESS TO THE LORD, be written upon every door? O, when shall it once be "

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DUTIES OF SERVANTS.

"Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will, doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing, that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." *EPHES. vi. 5-8.*

"Honor and shame from no condition rise,  
Act well your part—there all the honor lies."

God is the creator of all things, and the disposer of all events; he is, therefore, the author of all those varieties which are to be found in nature, and of all those differences which exist in society. He that formed the sun to illuminate, and to rule, formed also the planets to be enlightened and to be governed; and he that raiseth the king to the throne, ordaineth the lot of the servant in the house, and of the laborer in the field. There is no such thing as chance; no not in the material universe, where each bird that flies, each insect that crawls, each flower that blooms, amidst the desert, which man's eye never explores, is the separate production of divine power and skill, no less than the Alpine height which lifts its snow crowned summit to the skies, and receives the admiring contemplation of millions. Nor is there any such thing as chance in society: the rank and station of the poor little servant girl in the humblest dwelling of the most

obscure village, are as certainly determined by God, as the elevation of the conqueror and ruler of nations. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the disposal thereof is from the Lord." "The rich and the poor meet together, but the Lord is the disposer of them all;" i. e. not simply their creator, as men, but the disposer of their circumstances as rich and poor. This is comforting, this is reconciling. It prevents the poor from being degraded in their own eyes, or in the eyes of others. They are not like the dust, or the chips, or the dried and withered leaves in autumn, which, amidst the more stately objects of nature or art, are blown about by the gusts which sweep along the surface; but they are in the place which God intended for them; and God hath made every thing beautiful in its place and season. Who could have mended what he hath done? What cause have we to sit down contented and thankful in the place which he hath ordained for us! What obligation was he under to give us existence? And what did he owe to us that he should have made us rational creatures, and not formed us a beast, or a reptile? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

As God disposeth every thing, so it is the highest excellence of a creature, to discharge the duties of his station, and to shine in the orbit, and move with regularity through the course allotted to him. A good servant is more honorable than a bad master; and a valuable subject than a worthless prince. He that is not *relatively* good, is not *really* so; while he that acts his part well, is more truly dignified, though his rank be low, than he that stands on a pinnacle, but fails in the duty of his elevated station. What is true honor? Not riches, not rank, not beauty, not learning, not courage. No. But virtue; whether it be clad in the garb of poverty, or the robe of affluence; whether it hold the plough or grasp the sceptre; whether it be seated at the table, or stand behind the chair. **VIR-TUE IS HONOR**; let all servants write this sentiment on the heart, and ever act under its influence, as the living principle of all their conduct.

In stating, after these preliminary remarks, the duties of servants, I would remind them,

First. *That there are some which they owe to THEMSELVES*, the performance of which will constitute the best and surest foundation of those which they owe to others.

1. **RELIGION** takes the lead of all.

Religion is as much your business as it is ours. You are immortal creatures, you are sinners, you are the objects of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, and invited to seek pardon, peace, and eternal life, as well as we your employers. You have souls that must suffer eternal torments in hell, or enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven. You must be convinced of sin, repent, confess to God, cry for mercy, commit your souls into the hands of Christ by faith, be born again of the Holy Ghost, lead a sober, righteous, and godly life, or you must depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. God is as willing to have mercy upon you; Jesus Christ is as ready to receive you, as he is us. Your soul is as precious in the eye of heaven as ours. God is no respecter of persons, and is not to be considered as less friendly to your best interests, because he has placed you in service. *Your situation is no excuse, therefore, for your neglecting the claims of religion.* You are not to imagine that attention to your souls' concerns is not required from you; for it is required: and I repeat it, unless you repent, and are born again, and believe in Christ, you will perish eternally. Your soul is your first concern, and must not be neglected for any thing. Think not that it is impossible for a person in your situation to attend to religion; for it is possible. Great multitudes of servants, both male and female, are truly pious. I have twenty or thirty in the church under

my care, who are among its most consistent members. I charge you all to live in the fear of God. Remember your Creator. Set the Lord always before you. Consider that he is ever about your path, and that you act, speak and think in his presence. He is now the holy and ever present witness, and will hereafter be the inflexible judge of your actions.

In order to cultivate religion, go not into wicked families, where the Sabbath is profaned, the claims of piety are despised and rejected, and you can have no opportunity of going to public worship. Do not dwell in a place where your Sabbath is taken away from you; let no amount of wages tempt you to go or to remain in such a situation. Always stipulate for the privilege of going at least one part of the Lord's day, to the house of God. Insist upon it as your right, and suffer nothing to deprive you of it. Endeavor to find a little time for reading the Bible, and for prayer. Never go out of your room in the morning, nor lie down on your pillow at night, without reading a portion, even though it be a short one, of God's holy word, and earnestly praying for his mercy. Let religion be the basis of all your conduct, the very frame-work of your character, leading you to practise "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report." Do not, then, as you would escape the torments of hell, do not, as you would be brought at last to the felicities of heaven, **DO NOT NEGLECT YOUR SOULS.** "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." Your situation is a very dangerous one; you are in a very unprotected state; and you need the fear of God to enable you to depart from evil. Men, and women too, of bad principles, are lying in wait for you, spreading snares for your feet, and seeking your ruin. Religion will guard you, and guide you, and comfort you: it will keep you in safety, and raise you to respectability. "Exalt her, and she shall promote thee, she shall lead thee to honor when thou dost embrace her."

2. A REGARD TO TRUTH, is another very important duty, and which you will be sure to perform if you fear God. This duty you owe to your employers also; but while the *inconvenience* of the neglect of it will be felt by them, the more dreadful consequence of that neglect will be yours.

Lying is a most hateful and wicked practice. And it is said, that "all liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire." Strive to avoid every thing in your conduct that needs a sin to cover it: but if you have at any time done any thing wrong, do not make one sin two, by telling a falsehood to conceal the matter. Let no temptation induce you to violate a truth; rather endure the passion, or the bitterest wrath of the severest master or mistress, than strive to avert it by a falsehood. Lying is bad policy, as well as great wickedness; for, when once detected in this vice, you will ever afterwards be suspected, even when you tell the truth. A servant, whose word can be implicitly relied upon, will always be esteemed. Such a virtue will be made to extend a friendly covering over many little faults. Never allow yourselves to be tempted by your master or mistress to commit a breach of truth. Inform them at once, that they must tell their own falsehoods, for that you cannot do it for them. A clerk once waited upon me, to ask me what he was to do in a situation, where he was obliged weekly to make a false written return in his own name, to defraud a public company, for the benefit of his employer. "Do," said I, with surprise that the question should have been asked me, "instantly refuse; and rather cast yourself and your family the next hour upon Providence, than ever repeat the falsehood." You must not, dare not, lie for others any more than for yourselves. If required to adopt the modern prac-



tice, of saying, your mistress is not at home, when she is at the same time in the house; you dare not comply, for it is a falsehood, and as such, is a sin against God. When you are put by your employers upon committing any sin, whether it be cheating, calumny, lying, or any thing else forbidden by the Scriptures, let your reply be, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."

3. **SOBRIETY** is a virtue you owe to yourselves, and also to your masters; but, as in the case of lying, the injury done by intoxication to yourselves, is far greater than that which you inflict upon them.

Beware of the besotting, impoverishing, damning sin of drunkenness, and of every thing that leads to it. Household servants have many opportunities, and many temptations to practise this vice, if there be any propensity to indulge in it. It is impossible even for the most rigid watchfulness always to keep out of their reach the mault liquor, the spirits, and the wine; there are means of gaining access by stealth, to these things, on the part of a vicious and ingenious servant, which no vigilant mistress can altogether prevent. If we cannot trust these things to the guardianship of your principles, our locks and keys will often be found an insufficient security. Do, do consider, that if the habit of drunkenness be once contracted, it is all over; and most probably you are ruined for both worlds. Let there be a distinct understanding between you and your master or mistress, what beverage you are to be allowed, both as to quality and quantity, and most sacredly abstain from touching a drop more, or a drop of any thing else. Never put the decanters to your lips, when the stoppers are all out before you. Stolen drams of this kind are double poison, they are venom for the body, and damnation for the soul; they lead to two crimes at once, drunkenness and dishonesty. Beware of the temptation which is presented at those times, when company is in the house, and when, through the supposition, that extra exertion requires an additional glass, you may be led to take it, to love it, and to acquire the *habit* of it. I have known excellent servants, both male and female, ruined for ever by intoxication.

As to workmen, the daily servants that occupy the manufactories, this vice is the damning sin that is spreading immorality, desolation, and misery through almost the whole laboring population of the community. It is distressing beyond the power of language to describe, to think of the effects of this most prevalent, most dreadful infatuation. How many fine athletic forms are enervated; how many wives are broken-hearted; how many families are reduced to beggary; how many souls are damned continually, by this crime. Drunken servants are the torment of almost all our master manufacturers, the curse upon our commerce, and the blight upon our national prosperity.

4. **CHASTITY** is a duty of infinite importance to the well being of servants.

I am now on delicate ground, and I will endeavor to step with caution; but no false refinement shall hinder me from discharging a duty, which, as a guardian of the public morals, I owe to a very large, and a very much exposed class of my fellow creatures. I will not allow a prudish and affected sentimentalism to turn away my holy and benevolent concern from the interests of female servants, nor prevent me from addressing to them the language of warning and exhortation. When the miseries of prostitution are considered, and when the prevalence of this desolating crime, and all its attendant evils is at once admitted and deplored; when it is well known, that of the miserable and loathsome victims of seduction that crowd the paths of vice, a very large proportion were female servants, betrayed from the ways of virtue, in the first instance, by their masters or their masters'

sons, or their fellow servants of the opposite sex, surely it is the duty of every one who is specially addressing young women in service, most solemnly and most pointedly to warn them against the wily arts of the basileus seducer, who is fascinating them to their ruin.

Young women, consider the value, even in this world, of your character. With an unblemished reputation, you are respectable in servitude: your virtue is your parents' honest pride, your families' only renown, and your own wealth and honor: this will be your passport through the world, your letter of recommendation to good society, and that which will find you friends, and make them, and keep them, wherever Providence may cast your lot. But if this be lost, oh, what a poor, forlorn, withered, wretched creature you become; abandoned by your seducer, ejected from your place, disowned by your friends, you have the pains and the cares, and the labors of a mother, but united with the infamy of a prostitute; you have to bear the scorn of the world, the look and language of shame-stricken, heart-broken parents from without, and the ceaseless reproach and remorse of a guilty conscience from within; and all this, perhaps, but as preliminary to the misery which the prostitute endures, through her loathsome course on earth, and its awful termination in hell. Take warning, then, and reject with disdain and virtuous indignation, the very first encroachments that may be made, by any one, upon the most delicate modesty and reserve. Have you been unfortunate enough to draw upon yourself the attention of a master, or a master's son, consider, it is with the eye of lust, not of love, that he looks upon you; he may flatter your vanity by his admiration of your person, but it is the flattery of a murderer; he cannot mean any thing that is honorable; his passion, that he talks of, is a base, ruffian-like, deliberate purpose to ruin you. Turn from him, flee from him with more haste than you would from a serpent or a tiger, for more than a serpent or a tiger he is to be shunned by you. Make him feel that you are his superior in virtue, though his inferior in rank. If, on the other hand, you allow him to accomplish his purpose, and decoy you to perdition, he will in cold-blooded, remorseless cruelty, abandon you and your child to a work-house, to a broken heart, and the bottomless pit.

Act in the same determined manner towards every one else. Preserve not only your virtue itself, but your modesty, which is its outwork. Allow neither act, nor word, nor look in your presence, which is at variance with the most scrupulous purity. Let no prospect nor promise of marriage throw you off your guard. The man who acts thus, is to be regarded as a traitor deceiving you into iniquity. He that would destroy your reputation, will not scruple to falsify his own word; the vows of such a wretch are not to be trusted. Be careful to whom you give your company. Let not an anxiety to leave service, and be your own mistress, drive you to accept the offer of the first individual, suitable or unsuitable, who may present himself to your notice.

5. **FRUGALITY** is an incumbent duty upon persons in your situation.

You are in very dependant circumstances. Your support depends upon your own labor, and that upon your health. You have no arm but your own to rely upon, and should therefore feel the obligation of laying up something in the day of prosperity, against the night of adversity. We are all enjoined to *trust* Providence, but not to *tempt* it. To spend all we get in vanity and useless trifles, under the idea that we shall be taken care of, in one way or other, is a presumption that generally brings its own punishment. There is in the present day, a most censurable propensity in female servants, and workwomen in general, to dress quite beyond their station. It is not easy, in some

cases, to distinguish between the maid and her mistress. What abject folly is it, for a young woman to spend all her wages in gay apparel. When she is in ill health and out of place, will it be any consolation to look upon finery which she is obliged to pawn, one article after another, for her support? The love of dress has led in some instances to stealing; in others, to prostitution; in more, to poverty. Character is respectability, not dress. Harlots are generally fine and gaudy in their attire. Economize your little property, then; lay up in store for the time to come. I know several servants who have, one forty, another fifty, another one hundred pounds in the bank. Besides, it is desirable to save from unnecessary expense in dress, that you may have a little to give to the cause of humanity and religion. The mite of the servant may mingle, in this age, with the pound of the master, to help in spreading the blessings of Christianity over the face of the earth. And it is to be poor indeed, to have nothing to give to the cause of humanity or religion.

*Secondly.* I now lay before you the duties you owe to your EMPLOYERS.

1. *Honor them:* for they are your superiors in station. Pay them the respect which is due to them, and in order to this, cherish for them a proper reverence in your heart. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke," said the apostle, "count their own masters worthy of all honor." Behave towards them with all proper humility and submission: not that you are to crouch and tremble before them, like slaves at the foot of a tyrant. Your address to them must be reverent, not rude, boisterous, and impertinent. In talking of them to others, in their absence, there should be no eulging them names, no exposure of their faults, no ridiculing their infirmities; on the contrary, you should, to the utmost of your power, as far as truth will allow, defend them against the attacks of slander, and the arts of detraction. If, at any time, they speak to you with tones of anger, and in the language of rebuke, you must remember the apostle's injunction, and "not answer again." You may mildly and meekly explain, and sometimes expostulate, but you must not reply in an angry and impertinent manner. Should they so far forget their duty, as to let down their dignity, and be too familiar, do not forget your place, but respectfully keep your proper distance. Every thing rude in conduct, and obtrusive, insolent or familiar in language, must, therefore, be most sedulously avoided, as an essential part of servants' conduct towards their employers.

2. *Obedience* is founded upon reverence, and is a necessary part of it. Observe the directions of the apostle Paul. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." We are of course to except those things which are contrary to the word of God: for if they enjoin any thing that is manifestly sinful, you must mildly, but firmly, refuse to comply, and be prepared to take all the consequences of your disobedience. In all other matters, however self-denying or difficult, however contrary to your own views and wishes, you must submit; you are not to choose your commands, but in all things to obey. You are to obey "with fear and trembling," i. e. with reverential regard for their authority, a dread of their displeasure, and also, which is probably the apostle's meaning, with a dread of the anger of God, who, having enjoined obedience, will punish the disobedient. You are to obey "in singleness of heart," i. e. with a willing and cheerful mind; and not with a mere compulsory outside show of submission, and are to be free from all selfish personal ends, and obey from the single consideration that it is right. You are to do this, "as unto Christ, as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men." You must consider, that God com-

mands it, and therefore you are to obey them, as obeying God; they are in God's stead, in this particular, to you; and from a regard to conscience, and a respect to the divine authority, you are to do what they enjoin. "I do this," you are to say, in reference to disobedience, "not merely to please my master and my mistress, but to please God." This is turning all you do into religion. It signifies nothing, what is the nature of the thing, whether it be an act of the most menial kind, in the kitchen, the parlor, or the garden, if it be done with a view to the divine command, that very aim elevates the humble service into an expression of piety towards God, and a service that will be remembered in the day of judgment. You are not to obey, "with eye service, as men pleasers." How many are there, who need a master's eye always upon them, to keep them industrious. No sooner is his back turned, than they are indolent and neglectful. This conduct is as mean as it is wicked: it is detestable hypocrisy, flagrant injustice, and manifest wickedness; for is it nothing that the eye of God is upon you? Is he not there? Does he not disapprove this conduct? And is it a small matter to make light of his presence? Such servants will shortly find to their fearful cost, that the eye of God is far more to be dreaded than the eye of the severest master.

Let it be your *delight* to do the will of your employers. Strive to please them in all things, and feel anxious to draw from them this testimony,—"There is a servant, to whom no command, which it is in her power to obey, comes unwelcome; who never need be told a second time to do a thing; who anticipates my orders; and whose very pleasure seems to arise from pleasing me."

3. *GOOD TEMPER* is of great consequence.

There are some servants who, let what work will come in unexpectedly, and even oppressively, receive all with a cheerful acquiescence, and are never put out of their way. Their mistresses are never afraid of telling them of unlooked-for company having arrived, and extra exertion being necessary. While there are others who, with many valuable qualities, are withal so peevish, so soon put out of temper, so cross at any little unexpected addition being made to their work, that their mistresses are in constant bondage. I like not to hear it said, "She is a very good servant, and has many excellent properties, but her temper is so bad, that I am quite afraid to point out to her, in ever so gentle a manner, the least imperfection, or to put her in the smallest degree out of her way." This is a serious blemish upon any excellence, and often proves a very great interruption to the comfort of the family, but a still greater interruption to the comfort of the poor waspish creature herself. Temper is not every thing, but it is very important. Study, therefore, to be obliging, and to avoid crossness, sullenness, and passion.

4. *FIDELITY* is a duty of the highest rank.

What a delightful testimony is that which our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as bearing to his people at the last day,—"Well done, good and FAITHFUL servant." Such also is the testimony which it should be in our power to bear to our servants. Fidelity has reference—

*To the property of your masters.*

Faithful servants will not actually STEAL the property of their masters. There are opportunities of this every where if you choose to avail yourselves of them. Consider the horrible disgrace of being called a thief; and add to this the danger in the present world, and the punishment of such a crime in the next. Write the eighth commandment upon your heart, and when tempted by a favorable opportunity to embezzle the property of your employer, let a voice more awful than thunder repeat in your ears the prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal." At that perilous moment in your history, let your imagination look up, and behold



the flaming eye of God, intently gazing upon you. In whatever profusion, money, plate, jewelry, lace, may be spread out before you, touch not, covet not. Determine, by God's grace, that though you be ever so poor, you will at least be honest. Honesty is indeed the best policy, to go no higher for a motive of commendation. A single act of stealing may blast your reputation for ever; even to be suspected, is dreadful: but what inestimable value is attached to a servant of tried honesty. Be honest even to *scrupulosity*. Touch nothing in the house in the way of *eatables* or *drinkables*, which you do not consider as belonging to you. If you want to taste the luxuries of the larder, ask for them; but do not appropriate to yourself what you think would be denied. I have read of a servant who went into the pantry only to make free with sweetmeats, but seeing some articles of plate lying about, he took these, and went on from one degree of theft to another, till he died at the gallows. He was under the influence of a thievish disposition when he saw the plate, for he was going to take what he had no right to, and he was in a favorable state of mind to be tempted by Satan to a greater crime. Servants should not allow themselves to appropriate any refuse articles of dress, nor give away the broken victuals, or other articles of the kitchen, without permission. Habits begin in acts; little sins lead on to greater ones. She that commences by taking a sweetmeat, knowing that she is not allowed it, has violated so far her integrity, has done something to benumb her conscience, and has taken the first step towards confirmed dishonesty. Sin is deceitful; and the way of a sinner is like the course of a ball, down hill. Servants, beware of the first act of sin. But fidelity, in reference to property, requires not only that you should not embezzle your master's property, but that you should not waste it. They that carelessly waste, are almost as guilty as they that wilfully steal. You cannot be an honest servant, unless you are as careful of your employer's property as if it were your own. Furniture, goods, provisions, must all be thus preserved. You are not to say, "My master is rich, he can spare it, and we need not be so niggardly." His wealth is nothing to you: if he chooses to waste it, he has a legal right to do so, but you have none.

Nor is this all, for fidelity requires that servants should do all they can to make their employer's affairs prosper. They should grieve over their master's losses, rejoice in his success, and so identify their feelings with his interests, as to seem as if their fortune were bound up with his. We have a fine instance of this in the case of Joseph, while he was in the house of Potiphar.

Fidelity would also lead them to give their employers information and warning when their affairs are going wrong, either through their own neglect or ignorance, or through the injurious conduct of others. They cannot be honest if they witness in silence any fraud practised upon them, either by their fellow-servants or by friends or strangers. Such connivance is a participation of the crime, although it should not be rewarded by any participation of the profits. A proper feeling of concern for your master's welfare, would certainly lead you, if he were flagrantly neglectful of his affairs, to suggest to him in a respectful manner, your apprehension of the consequences. What man, except a fool or a madman, would be offended by such an appeal as the following, made to him by a servant:—"Pardon me, Sir, if I take the liberty of expressing my fears on the subject of your business, which I am induced to do, by a sense of my own duty, and a true regard to your welfare. Your business is certainly declining, and I fear, through your being so frequently absent from it. Customers are offended by not meeting with the principal in the shop, and by finding the stock so low and ill assorted. I am so concerned for

your family, and so distressed at the idea of your doing otherwise than well, that at the risk of incurring your displeasure, which I entreat you not to indulge against me, for this self-denying act of faithful service, I have determined to lay the matter before you, and to beg of you to give up your company, to look into your accounts, and to attend more closely to your business." A servant that would do this, and in this manner, is fidelity embodied, and is a treasure beyond all price.

But faithfulness has a reference also to a master's time, for in many instances time is property, and servants may as effectually rob their masters by idleness, as by stealing. This is always the case where they are hired by the day; and indeed where, as in many branches of manufacture, they are paid by the piece, if by their idleness they prevent their employers from executing orders, and realizing profits, they can scarcely be called faithful. When you hire yourselves, there should be an explicit understanding, as I have already said, how much time you are to render for the stipulated wages, and when this is known, all that by idleness you keep back, is just so much of your employer's property stolen from him.

Faithfulness has regard to the reputation of your master or mistress. You have their character in your hands, and by calumny and falsehood, may, if such a malicious disposition were in your heart, do them considerable harm, either by stating what is absolutely false, misrepresenting what is true, magnifying what is little, or exaggerating what is insignificant. Remember, it is the utmost excess of base conduct, and the wickedest kind of dishonesty, to attempt to rob them of their good name.

Then there are also *secrets* which it would be a very unfaithful act in you to disclose. Workmen, clerks, and apprentices, are guilty of great impropriety, if they communicate the private arts of their master's business, or lay open his connections to any one. Such an act is, by common opinion, an instance of criminal treachery. Female servants ought not to tell to others what they see and hear in the families where they are placed. It is to be apprehended that much of the gossip, and many of the reports, which circulate so much slander and detraction through society, are to be traced up to this source. You are not forbidden to form friendships with your fellow-servants in other families, but to meet merely for the purpose of exchanging intelligence from the respective households in which you live, is highly censurable. You should maintain the strictest silence on these affairs, and not allow the most busy and inquisitive curiosity of others to draw any thing from you. Nor are you to tell these matters, as is often done, to one particular friend, for she may tell them to one more, till at length the affairs of the family are matter of public notoriety. Your admission into a family is attended with an implied condition, that you are to keep all its secrets.

5. DILIGENCE is another duty, but is so necessarily connected with honesty, and indeed so essentially a part of it, that much need not be said, in addition, to illustrate and enforce it. The slothful servant is a wicked one, for in some instances more mischief may be done by a day's idleness, than others may be able to undo by a year's exertion. The habits of a sluggard are very unfriendly to your own reputation, and to the comfort of the family by whom you are employed. *Early rising* is absolutely indispensable, if, in addition to the duties of your station, you would attend to the salvation of your soul. And will you not sacrifice half an hour's sleep, for the purpose of seeking glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life? Diligence is opposed to sauntering, inactive, and gossiping habits: to a slow, reluctant, grudging way of doing your work. A disposition to stint your labor, to do as little as you possibly can, and to do that little in a careless, unneat, half-finished manner, is a great blemish in your cha-

racter, and will be sure to militate against your interest.

6. *GRATITUDE for kindness shown you, is very incumbent.*

You ought to be thankful for having your faults pointed out, and not resentful, as too many are, towards those who are kind enough to show them what is wrong. If you have received kind attentions in sickness, and have discovered a constant solicitude on the part of your employers to soften as much as possible your labor, and to render you comfortable in your situation, you should convince them that their attentions are not thrown away upon one who is insensible to their kindness. Especially if they have taken pains to promote your interest, by warning you against bad company, or by endeavoring to correct your bad practices, you should be grateful for their pains, and endeavor to comply with their advice.

7. In all such cases as those mentioned, where your masters and mistresses are your friends, and confer obligations by their kindness, you should be *truly and cordially attached to them.*

Where there is really nothing to produce attachment, you cannot be expected to feel any. You cannot be required to feel gratitude, where you have received no favors; nor to cherish affection, where you have met with no indulgence. But all masters and mistresses are not tyrants, as some of you know by experience; for you have found in them, something, at least, of the kindness of a second father or mother. Here there are certainly strong claims upon your affection, as they have cared for you with the kindness of parents, you should serve them with the deep interest and devoted attachment of children. We have a right to expect, in such instances, that as we have studied your comfort, you would study ours; that when sickness invades our frame or our family, you will minister at the sick bed by night or by day, not grudging your ease or your sleep, so that you might do us good; that when losses diminish our property and our comforts, you will most tenderly sympathize with us, mingling your tears with ours, and be willing to share with us the reduction of our usual plenty and gratification; that, in short, in all our afflictions, you will be afflicted with us, and be the sharers of all our joys. We did not, and we could not bargain with you for such a duty as this; affection cannot be made an article of a money contract; it must be given, or it is worth nothing, and indeed, bought and sold it cannot be. Instances of a generous affection of this kind, we have perhaps all known; instances of servants so attached to their masters and mistresses, as to follow them, and remain in their service through all the vicissitudes of fortune; as to descend with them from the lofty eminence, and luxurious gratifications of prosperity, down into the lowly, and desolate, and barren vale of poverty, there to suffer want with them; as to leave their native land and cross the seas, and dwell in a foreign country with them; as even to find in their love to their master and mistress, a principle and a feeling, that reconciled them to all the sufferings they endured on their account. I know a servant, who, when her master failed in business, brought down her little hoard of savings, amounting to nearly thirty pounds, and entreated him, with tears, to accept and apply it for the comfort and relief of his family. "Sir," said a lady to a minister who called upon her in sickness, "that girl," alluding to her servant, "who has just left the room, is a greater comfort to me, than I can express. She watches over me with the affection of a daughter and the care of a nurse. When my complaints make me peevish, she contrives something to soothe me. I often observe her taking pains to discover what would add to my comfort, and often am presented with the thing I wish for, before I express it in words. I live without suspicion, for I per-

ceive her to be conscientious, even to scrupulosity; my chief complaint is, that she takes too much care of me, that I cannot make her take sufficient care of herself."

Servants, look at this character, admire it, imitate it.

THIRDLY. *There are duties which servants in the same family owe to each other.*

There ought to be no *tyranny nor oppression exercised by one over the other.* This is often the case in those families which employ a numerous retinue of domestics, and which admit the distinction of superior and inferior servants. There is sometimes in such households, a system of great cruelty carried on, altogether unknown to the master. Some poor creatures are degraded into the condition of a slave to the other servants, and drag on a miserable existence, under the heavy yoke which has been imposed upon them, by an unfeeling minion, who stands before the master's eye, and has always his ear at command.

Strive to agree with each other, for families are often disturbed by the quarrels of the servants, and the uproar in the kitchen, is distinctly heard by the guests in the parlor. You should bear with one another's infirmities, and never take delight in thwarting each other. Instead of finding pleasure in converting the infirmities of any one into a means of annoying, and a source of vexation to her, carefully avoid whatever, by appealing to these imperfections, or bringing them into notice, would render the subject of them, irritable or sullen. Never tease one another, which is too often done, especially where an individual is known to be petulant. The worst consequences have sometimes arisen from this practice. A few days ago, I saw an individual put to the bar of his country, upon an indictment for manslaughter, under the following circumstances.—His fellow servants, aware of his petulant disposition, provoked him by some petty vexations, till, in his rage, he hurled a hammer at them, which struck one of them in the head, and inflicted a wound of which he died.

Never bear tales to your employers, for the purpose of exciting a prejudice against each other, and ingratiating yourselves into their favor. A supplanter is a most hateful character, at once despicable and despised.

At the same time, you are not to connive at sin; if your fellow servants do any thing wrong, either in the way of drunkenness, lewdness, or dishonesty, you owe it to your master, to make him acquainted with the fact. You are dishonest if you conceal the dishonesty of others, and you are a partaker of those vices, which you allow to be perpetrated under your notice without making it known.

Servants that make a profession of religion, have great need to conduct themselves with singular propriety. Towards their masters and mistresses there should be the deepest humility, and the very reverse of every thing that bears even a distant resemblance of spiritual pride. There must be no consciousness of superiority, no air of importance, no affected sanctity; but a meek, modest, unobtrusive exhibition of the influence of religion, in making them strictly conscientious and exemplary, in the discharge of all the duties of their station. Their piety should be seen, not only in a constant anxiety to attend to the public means of grace, and in a regular performance of the private duties of religion, but also in making them more respectful and obedient; more meek and submissive; more honest and diligent than all the rest. That servant does not adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things, who does not shine in her sphere as a servant. There are occasions when you may seek to do good to those who employ you, if they are yet living without the possession of piety. Instances have occurred, in which such as you have been the instruments of converting their employers: and a



visible, but unostentatious exhibition of eminent and consistent piety, supported by as eminent a discharge of the duties of your station, followed by a modest and judicious introduction of the subject when a suitable occasion presents itself, may, by the grace of God, be blessed for the salvation of your master and mistress.

If, on the other hand, your profession of religion be not supported by consistency; if it render you proud, conceited, and consequential; if it be accompanied by an unsubdued temper, or by habits of inattention to the duties of your place; if it makes you troublesome about your religious privileges, so that in a time of emergency or sickness, you will not give up a single sermon without murmuring and sullenness, you do not glorify God, but dishonor him; you excite a prejudice against religion, rather than produce a prepossession in its favor.

Towards your fellow servants you should be meek, obliging, and generous; assuming nothing on the ground of your piety, never disgusting them by any apparent consciousness of superior sanctity, but at the same time, never scrupling to let them know and see that you fear God. Timidity to conceal your regards to the claims of religion, or vauntingly to acknowledge them, would equally excite a prejudice; but to yield to them with a firmness, that ridicule and opposition cannot bend, a consistency that scrutiny cannot impeach, and a humility that the reproached conscience of those who are offended, cannot misrepresent, will be sure to raise admiration, and, by the blessing of God, may produce imitation.

Are any of your fellow servants living in the neglect of religion, it is your duty, in a solemn and affectionate manner to warn them. "I knew a religious servant," says Mr. Janeway, "that after other endeavors for the conversion of one of his fellows, had proved ineffectual, spent some time at midnight to pray for him, and being very importunate, his voice was heard in the next chamber, where the object of his pious solicitude lay, who, on hearing the voice of entreaty, rose from bed to listen, and was so struck with the affectionate concern that was breathed out for him, that he was converted by the prayer."

Let me now, in conclusion, exhort you to attend to the duties which have been set before you. It may be felt as a motive to this, to consider that though you are servants, you are not slaves, as was the case with those who are addressed by the apostles, in their inspired writings. Yes, *they were slaves*, and yet are they admonished to give honor and service to those, who held them by a tie which they could not break. You are *free*, and your labor is voluntary; you sell it for a stipulated price, and are not degraded by your situation; nothing *can* degrade you but bad conduct. Your interest lies in the faithful discharge of your duties. This will secure to you peace and serenity of mind, the respect and attachment of your employers, the esteem of the public, the testimony of conscience, and the approbation of God. You will thus help to diffuse happiness through the families in which you reside: for a good servant is one of those springs of domestic comfort, and daily refreshes, by its pure and pleasant stream, the members of the little community in the house, who, in return, will do what they can to promote your present comfort, and provide for your future support, when the days of sickness, and the years of old age shall come upon you. And remember that God is every where, and his eye is always upon you. "He compasseth your path, and knoweth your down sitting and up rising, and there is not a word upon your tongue, but he knoweth it altogether." You may have an absent master, but you cannot have an absent God. And he cites your conscience to his side, to take a correct copy, and lodge it in your bosom, of the record of your actions, words,

and feelings, which he writes down in the book of his remembrance. Time is short, life is uncertain, death is at hand, and the judgment approaching, when it will be of no consequence who was master, and who was servant, but only who was holy and faithful. God is now your witness, and will be hereafter your judge. Have the promises and the threatenings of the great master little efficacy? Are heaven, glory, and eternal happiness worth nothing? If so, what think you of condemnation, wrath, and everlasting misery? If the former signify little, do the latter signify no more? Then I must confess, I know not what further to say, for I have exhausted the differences of time, and the varieties of eternity; I have spread out the miseries which sin brings, and the pleasure which holiness produces upon earth; and have added to this the consideration of the eternal torment which iniquity draws upon itself in hell, and the everlasting felicity which religion conducts the soul to enjoy in heaven:—what more *can* I add—but simply to say, choose ye, whether to you it shall be said in the last day by the Lord Jesus Christ, "THOU WICKED AND SLOTHFUL SERVANT, DEPART ACCURSED FROM ME INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS," or, "WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT, ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE FRATERNAL DUTIES.

"Next in order to the relationship of the parent and the child may be considered the relation which the child bears to those who are united with him by the same tie to the same parental bosom. If friendship be delightful, if it be above all delightful to enjoy the continued friendship of those who are endeared to us by the intimacy of many years, who can discourse with us of the frolics of the school, of the adventures and studies of the college, of the years when we first ranked ourselves with men in the free society of the world, how delightful must be the friendship of those who, accompanying us through all this long period, with a closer union than any casual friend, can go still farther back, from the school to the very nursery, which witnessed our common pastimes; who have had an interest in every event that has related to us, and every person that excited our love or our hatred; who have honored with us those to whom we have paid every filial honor in life, and wept with us over those whose death has been to us the most lasting sorrow of our heart! Such, in its wide, unbroken sympathy, is the friendship of brothers, considered even as friendship only; and how many circumstances of additional interest does this union receive, from the common relationship to those who have original claims to our still higher regard, and to whom we offer an acceptable service, in extending our affection to those whom they love! In treating of the circumstances that tend peculiarly to strengthen this tie, CICERO extends his view even to the common sepulchre that is at last to enclose us. It is, indeed, a powerful image, a symbol, and almost a lesson of unanimity. Every dissension of man with man excites in us a feeling of painful incongruity. But we feel a peculiar incongruity in the discord of those whom one roof has continued to shelter through life, and whose dust is afterwards to mingle under a single stone."

DR. THOMAS BROWN.

TO SECURE the comfort and well being of a state, it is not only necessary for the sovereign to be wise and patriotic, and the laws justly and impartially administered, but the people must be well affected both towards the government, and towards each other; there must be a tie which binds them to each other, as well

as to the state; there must be the fellowship of good neighborhood. So, also, the happiness and welfare of a family depend not exclusively on the conduct of the parents to the children, nor on the conduct of the children to the parents, but also on the conduct of the children to each other. No family can be happy where a right feeling is wanting on the part of brothers and sisters. Nothing can be a substitute for this defect; and it is of great importance that all young people should have this set in a proper light before them. Many households are a constant scene of confusion, a perpetual field of strife, and an affecting spectacle of misery, through the quarrels and ill will of those, who, as flesh of each other's flesh, and blood of each other's blood, ought to have towards each other no feeling but that of love, and to use no words but those of kindness.

I will divide the fraternal duties into three kinds.

Those that are appropriate to the season of *childhood*—of *youth*—of *manhood*.

The general principles which are to regulate the discharge of these duties, and on which, indeed, they rest, are the same in reference to all seasons of life. Love, for instance, is equally necessary, whether brothers and sisters are sporting together in the nursery, dwelling together as young men and women beneath the parental roof, or descending the hill of life at the head of separate establishments and families of their own. Over and above the feelings of friendship, or of moral esteem, there must be those of complacency in them, as related to us by the ties of consanguinity; a consciousness, that, by the dispensations of providence in uniting them to us by a bond of nature, and which nothing but death can dissolve, they have acquired a claim upon our efforts to make them happy, which is stronger than that of any strangers, except it be in those cases, where our brothers and sisters have, by their unkind and cruel conduct, thrown off every thing but their name, and the stranger has assumed towards us the heart of a brother. And even in this case, we must still consider that they are our brothers, mourn their alienation with grief, view their aberrations with pity, watch them in their wanderings with an anxious interest, and keep the way open for their return to our fellowship. Children of the same parent, who are wanting in love, are wanting in the first virtue of a brother and a sister as such. It is true, they may find companions more to their taste, considered as mere subjects of intellectual or general companionship, persons of more agreeable manners, of more pleasing tempers, of more cultivated minds; but these are not brothers, nor must the perception, which in some cases it is impossible to avoid, of their great superiority in many respects, destroy that natural impulse, which the heart ought ever to feel and to obey, towards a brother or a sister. 'This love must of course be increased or diminished in its exercise by circumstances, such as good or bad conduct, kindness or unkindness; but nothing must destroy the principle. The Scripture, which is so replete with admonitions on almost every other subject, has said little on this; it has left nature spontaneously to send forth its fraternal energies; and, though containing many exhortations to the children of God to abound in brotherly love, has said little on this topic to the children of men; a reserve which seems rather to imply that the duty is so obvious and so easy as not to need an injunction, than that the discharge of it is not obligatory or not important. A child, a youth, or a man, who feels no goings forth of his heart, no peculiar interest, no appropriate and restrictive emotions towards a brother or a sister, is wanting in one of those social virtues, which it was certainly the intention of Providence should arise out of the relative ties.

But I will now go on to state how the various fraternal duties should be discharged in *childhood*.

Brothers and sisters should make it a study to promote each other's happiness. They should take pleasure in pleasing each other, instead of each being selfishly taken up in promoting his own separate enjoyment. They should never envy each other's gratification; if one has a more valuable plaything than the other, the rest should rather rejoice than be sorry. Envy in children is likely to grow into a most baleful and malignant disposition. They should never take each other's possessions away, and be always willing to lend what cannot be divided, and to share what *does* admit of being divided. Each must do all he can to promote the happiness of the whole. They should never be indifferent to each other's sorrows, much less laugh at, and sport with each other's tears and griefs. It is a lovely sight to see one child weeping because another is in distress. A boy that sees his brother or sister weep, and can be unconcerned or merry at the sight, would, when he becomes a man, in all probability, see them starve without helping them. Children should never accuse each other to their parents, nor like to see each other punished. An informer is a hateful and detestable character; but an informer against his brother or sister is the most detestable of all spies. If, however, one should see another doing that which is wrong, and which is known to be contrary to the will of their parents, he should first in a kind and gentle manner point out the wrong, and give an intimation that if it be not discontinued, he shall be obliged to mention it; and if the warning be not taken, it is then manifestly his duty to acquaint their parents with the fact. They must not tease or torment one another. How much domestic uneasiness sometimes arises from this source! One of the children, perhaps, has an infirmity or weakness of temper, or awkwardness of manner, or personal deformity, and the rest, instead of pitying it, tease and torment the unhappy individual, till all get quarrelling and crying together. Is this promoting their mutual comfort? If there be any one of the family that is in bad health, or weakly, all the rest, instead of neglecting that one, ought to strive to the uttermost to amuse him. How pleasing a sight it is, to see a child giving up his play time to read to, or converse with, a sick brother or sister! while nothing is more disgusting than that selfishness which will not spare a single hour for the amusement of the poor sufferer upon the bed, or the little prisoner in the nursery. As to fighting, quarrelling, or calling ill names, this is so utterly disgraceful, that it is a deep shame upon those children who live in such practices. Dr. Watts has very beautifully said:—

"Whatever brawls disturb the street,  
There should be peace at home;  
Where sisters dwell and brothers meet,  
Quarrels should never come.

"Birds in their little nests agree:  
And 'tis a shameful sight  
When children of one family  
Fall out, and chide and fight.

"Hard names, at first, and threatening words,  
That are but noisy breath,  
May grow to clubs and naked swords,  
To murder and to death."

Children that are removed from home to school should be both watchful over and kind to each other. They should manifest a peculiar and kind interest in each other's comfort, and not neglect one another. It is pleasant to see two brothers or two sisters, always anxious to have each other as playmates, or as members of the little circles with which they associate, defending one another from oppression or unkindness, and striving to make their absence from home as comfortable as they can by their mutual kindness.

I go on now to show in what way brothers and sis-



ters should behave towards each other during THE SEASON OF YOUTH.

I now suppose them to have arrived at the age of fourteen, and state their obligations between that period and the time when they settle in life. There should of course be a *tender attachment*, which becomes stronger, and more visible, as they acquire a greater power of reason to understand their relationship, and the design of Providence in forming this relation. Instead of this, however, we sometimes see brothers and sisters become more and more indifferent to each other, as they recede farther from the period of infancy. They should now reason upon the closeness of their relationship, and let the understanding give an additional impulse to their hearts. They should be *fond of each other's society, and put forth all their ingenuity to please one another*. It would have a delightful influence upon their mutual attachment, if their little separate proportion of pocket money were sometimes employed in making each other presents. How happy a state of feeling would be produced, if a sister, after having incidentally expressed a wish for some little article, were to be surprised soon after by finding that a brother had, unknown to her, purchased the elegant or useful trifle, and placed it upon her toilet or work table! Sisters should put forth all their assiduity to provide for brothers whatever the needle can do for their personal accommodation, and feel a hallowed delight in giving their labor to increase the comforts and conveniences of those whom it should be their study to please. A family of grown up children should be the constant scene of uninterrupted harmony, where love, guided by ingenuity, puts forth all its power to please, by those mutual good offices, and minor acts of beneficence, of which every day furnishes the opportunity, and which, while they cost little in the way either of money or labor, contribute so much to the happiness of the household. One of the most delightful sights in our world, where there is so much moral deformity to disgust, and so much unkindness to distress, is a domestic circle, where the parents are surrounded by their children, of which, the daughters are being employed in elegant or useful work, and the elder brother reading some instructive and improving volume, for the benefit or entertainment of the whole. This is the scene which more than justifies the beautiful apostrophe of the sweetest and most tender of all poets:—

"Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise that has survived the fall!  
Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,  
Or, tasting, long enjoy thee; too infirm  
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets  
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect  
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup.  
Thou art the nurse of virtue—in thine arms  
She dwells, appearing, as in truth she is,  
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.  
Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,  
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist,  
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm  
Of novelty, her fickle, frail support;  
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,  
And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love,  
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.  
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made  
Of honor, dignity and fair renown!"

Scenes are to be found, (but, alas, how rarely!) which give meaning and force to these lovely strains. Young people, seek your happiness in each other's society. What can the brother find in the circle of dissipation, or amongst the votaries of intemperance, to compare with this? What can the sister find amidst the concert of sweet sounds, that has music for the soul, compared with this domestic harmony? or in the glitter

and fashionable confusion, and mazy dance of the ball room, compared with these pure, calm, sequestered joys, which are to be found at the fire-side of a happy family? What can the theatre yield that is comparable with this?

"Oh evenings worthy of the gods! exclaimed  
The Sabine bard; On evenings, I reply,  
More to be prized and coveted than yours,  
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,  
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.  
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks  
That idleness has ever yet contrived  
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,  
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove."

I would advise all young people to read "The Task," and especially the fourth book; and to read it till they grow in love with those pure and hallowed home-born pleasures, which are at once the most attainable and the most satisfying of any to be found in our curse-stricken world.

It is of great importance to the pleasant intercourse of brothers and sisters, that *each should pay particular attention to the cultivation of the temper*. I have known all the comfort of a family destroyed by the influence of one passionate or sullen disposition. Where such a disposition unhappily exists, the subject of it should take pains to improve it, and the other branches of the family, instead of teasing, or irritating, or provoking it, should exercise all possible forbearance, and, with ingenuous kindness, help their unfortunate relative in the difficult business of self-control.

As woman seems formed by nature to execute the offices of a nurse, *sisters should be peculiarly kind and tender to sick brothers*; for there are few things which tend more to conciliate affection, than sympathy with us in our sufferings, and all those gentle and willing efforts, which, if they cannot mitigate our pains, have such a power to soothe our minds and divert our attention from the sense of suffering.

*Mutual respect* should be shown by brothers and sisters; all coarse, vulgar, degrading terms and modes of address should be avoided, and nothing but what is courteous either done or said. The intercourse of such relatives should be marked, not, indeed, by the stiffness of ceremony, nor the coldness of formality, nor the cautious timidity of suspicion, but by the politeness of good manners, blended with all the tenderness of love. It is peculiarly requisite also, that while this is maintained at home, there should not be disrespectful neglect in company. It is painful for a sister to find herself more neglected than the veriest stranger, and thus exposed to others as one in whom her brother feels no interest.

Brothers ought not, even in lesser matters, to be *tyrants over their sisters*, and expect from them the obsequiousness of slaves. The poor girls are sometimes sadly treated, and rendered miserable by the caprice and freaks, and iron yoke of some insolent and lordly boy. Where the parents are living, they ought not to suffer such oppression. Of such a despot let all young women beware, for he that is a tyrant to his sister is sure to be a tyrant also to a wife.

It is of great consequence, that brothers and sisters should maintain epistolary correspondence when absent from each other. It must be a very strong regard which separation, especially when it is for a long time, does not diminish. Flames burn brightest in the vicinity of each other. An affectionate letter, received from an absent friend, tends to fan the dying spark of affection. They who can be long separated without such a bond as this, are already in a state of indifference to each other, and are in rapid progress to still wider alienation.

Brothers and sisters should be very careful *not to be-*

*come estranged from each other after the death of their parents*; of which there is always some danger. While one parent remains, though the other be gone to the sepulchre, there is a common centre of family affection still left, by drawing near to which, the members are kept near to each other; but when this survivor has also departed, the point of union is gone, and the household is likely, without great watchfulness, to be divided and distracted. How often does this happen by the division of the family property.\* The grave has scarcely closed over the parental remains, before strife, confusion, and every evil work begin in reference to the patrimonial possessions. To guard against this, the father should ever have his will made, a will made upon the obvious principles of wisdom and equity. Any attempt, on the part of one child, to turn a parent's mind from the line of strict impartiality and equity towards the others; any advantage taken of opportunities of more frequent access to the parental ear and prejudices, to gain more than a just share of his property, is an act so base, so foul, and wicked, as to deserve the most severe, and impassioned, and indignant reprehension. Even in this case, however, the injured branches of the family should not so far resent the matter, as to withdraw from all intercourse with the supplanter: remonstrate they may, and abate something of their esteem and regard they must, but still they are required by Scripture to forgive him, and not to cherish hatred, or to manifest revenge. Unless in cases of unusual and extraordinary rapacity, the fraternal intercourse ought not to be stopped by unfair advantages of this kind.

There are instances, however, in which an *unequal* division of property is not an *unjust* one, and ought not to be felt as such, by the party which receives the lesser share. If one child has become possessed of wealth from another source, I do not think that he ought to consider himself unfairly dealt with, if he do not receive so large a portion of the family property as his brothers and sisters do. Or if there be one branch of the family prevented, by the visitations of Providence, from all active labor, the rest ought not to think it unfair, if a parent make a larger provision for this deformed or helpless child, than for the other branches. The alienation of brothers and sisters on account of pecuniary matters, is usually a matter of deep disgrace to them *all*; not only to the spoiler, but also to the rest.

But in what terms shall I depict the atrocious wickedness of a villanous brother, who, after the death of their parents, would employ his influence to wheedle and swindle an unmarried sister out of her property, and reduce her to poverty and dependance, to indulge his own rapacity, or to avert calamity from himself? Such wretches *have* existed, and *do* exist, who, taking advantage of a sister's strong affection, combined with her ignorance of money matters, never cease, till, by all the arts of subtlety, they have got out of her possession the last shilling she has in the world; and then, perhaps, when she has nothing more for them to pilfer, abandon the victim of their cruelty, with the remorselessness of a highwayman, to want and misery. Let such monsters remember, that there is one in heaven whose eye has been upon all their wicked arts and cruel robbery, and who, for all these things, will bring them into judgment. It is an act of cruelty in any brother, who, without any dishonest intention, perhaps, would wish to jeopardize the property of a sister, in order either to increase his own gains, or to avert his own dreaded misfortunes. *She* may be very unfitted to struggle with poverty, and altogether disqualified for earning support by her own industry, and therefore ought not to be exposed to the danger of losing her property. Cases do occur sometimes in which it may

be proper, and even necessary, for the property of unmarried sisters to be employed in the trade of their brothers; but as a general rule, it is *unadvisable*: and where it does happen, the latter should let all their conduct be conducted on the principles of the greatest caution, the most rigid integrity, and the noblest generosity.

Brothers ought ever, after the death of their parents, to consider themselves as the natural guardians of unmarried sisters; their advisers in difficulty, their comforters in distress, their protectors in danger, their sincere, tender, liberal and unchanging friends, amidst all the scenes and vicissitudes of life. It is rarely advisable that a sister should permanently dwell with a married brother; but then, even the much stronger claims of the wife ought not to cancel or throw into oblivion those of the sister.

I will now suppose the case of one or more branches of the family, who are brought by divine grace to be partakers of true religion, and point out what is their duty to the rest, and what the duty of the rest to them. In reference to the former, it is manifestly their solemn and irrevocable obligation to seek, by every affectionate, scriptural, and judicious effort, the real conversion of those of the family who are yet living without heartfelt religion. O, how often has the heaven of piety, when, by divine mercy and power, it has been laid in the heart of one of the family, spread through nearly the whole household! How often has fraternal love, when it has soared to its sublimest height, and, with a heaven-kindled ambition, aimed at the loftiest object which benevolence can possibly pursue, by seeking the salvation of a brother's soul, secured its prize, and received its rich reward! Young people whose hearts are under the influence of piety, but whose hearts also bleed for those who, though they are the children of the same earthly parent, are not yet the children of your Father in heaven, I call upon you by all the love you bear your brothers and sisters; by all the affection you bear for your parents; by all the higher love you bear to God and Christ, to seek by every proper means the conversion of those who, though bound to you by the ties of nature, are not yet united by the bond of grace. Make it an object with you to win their souls. Pray for it constantly. Put forth in your own example all the beauties of holiness. Seek for the most undeviating consistency, since a single want of this would only strengthen the prejudice you are anxious to subdue. Let them *see* your religion in your conscientiousness, your joy, your humility, your meekness, your love. In all the general duties of life, be more than ordinarily exact. Win their affections by the kindest and most conciliating conduct. Avoid all consciousness of superiority. Attempt not to scold them out of their sins. Avoid the language of reproach. Draw them with the cords of love, for *they* are the bands of a man. Now and then recommend to their perusal a valuable book. When they are absent, write to them on the subject of religion. But, at the same time, do not disgust them by boring them with religion. Seize favorable opportunities, and wisely improve them. Point them to eminently happy, consistent, and useful Christians. Comply with all their wishes that are lawful, but give not up one atom of your consistency. Pliancy on your part to meet their tastes and pursuits, if they are contrary to God's word, will only disgust them: mild firmness will secure their respect. And crown all with earnest prayer for that grace, without which no means can be successful. How knowest thou but thou shalt gain thy brother? And, O, what a conquest!

And what shall be said to the *unconverted* party? Shall such means be unsuccessful? Will you resist this holy, benevolent influence? Will you oppose these efforts to draw you to heaven? Will you leave your sister to travel alone to the skies, and determine

\* This, perhaps, rather belongs to the third division of the subject.



to separate from her for ever, and pursue your course to perdition? Will you seek the dreadful, the fatal disunion, of being alone in your family as the enemy of God, the captive of Satan? Shall a sister's solicitude for your salvation, and all the active efforts which it puts forth, be only a savor of death unto death to you? Pause and ponder, young man? Alter your purpose; take her by the hand, and say to her, "Your affection has conquered; I will go with you, for I know that God is with you." But, perhaps, instead of this, you are a persecutor. What, a persecutor of religion, and of a sister, at the same time? Yes, you reject with scorn these efforts for your salvation, and treat her with ridicule and unkindness by whom they are made. Is it so? What, wicked enough for *this*! What, carry your enmity to piety so far as to embitter the life of a sister, for no other reason than because she bows her heart to its influence! Recollect, the contest is not between you and her, but between you and God. It is not as a sister, but as a Christian, that she is the object of your displeasure, and, therefore, your ill will is against religion, and if against religion, then against God, for religion is the image of God in the soul of his rational creatures. Did you ever read or hear that fearful denunciation? If not, read it now,—“Wo to him that contendeth with his Maker.” This wo is uttered against every persecutor of religion, and therefore is against you.

The responsibility of *elder* brothers and sisters, especially that of the *FIRST BORN*, is great indeed. They are looked up to by the younger branches of the family as examples, and their example has great influence, in some cases greater than that of the parent: it is the example of one more upon a level with themselves, more near to them, more constantly before them than that of the parent, and is, on these accounts, more influential. It is of immense consequence, therefore, to their juniors, how these conduct themselves. If they are bad, they are likely to lead all the rest astray; if good, they may have great power in leading them aright. They bring companions, books, recreations, before the rest, which are proper or improper according as their own taste is. It is a most distressing spectacle to see an elder brother or sister training up younger ones, by his own conduct and precept, in the ways of wickedness. Such a youth is an awful character: like Satan, he goeth about seeking whom, by his temptations, he may destroy; but worse, in some respects more wicked and more cruel than his prototype, he marks out his own brother as the victim of his cruelty, and the dupe of his wiles. Whole families have, in some cases, been schooled in iniquity, by one unprincipled elder son. What will such a brother have to answer for in the day of judgment, and what will be his torment in hell, when the souls of those whom he has ruined shall be near him, and by their ceaseless reproaches become his eternal tormentors! In other cases, what a blessing to a family has been a steady, virtuous, and pious elder brother or sister! Many a weak and sickly mother has given daily thanks to God for a daughter, who by her attentions was a kind of second mother to the younger members of the family, whom she did her utmost to train up in her own useful and holy habits. Many a father has felt with equal gratitude the blessing of having in his first-born son, not only a help to himself in the cares of business, but in the work of education; a son who lent all the power of an amiable and religious example, to form the character of his younger brothers. Let such young persons consider their responsibility, and at the same time let those who are their juniors in the family consider *their* duty. If they have a good example in their elder brothers and sisters, they should make it not only the object of attention and admiration, but also of imitation; but, on the other hand, if, unhappily, the conduct of their seniors be bad, let them

not follow them in their evil course; let no threats, no bribes, no persuasions, induce them to comply with the temptation to do what is wrong.

I have now to allude to the discharge of fraternal duties *during the whole period of our lives, after the season of youth has passed away*. This has been anticipated in part already. Families are soon broken up; the parents die, the children marry and form separate establishments, and bring around them separate families of their own. This division of the original stock does not, however, destroy, although it necessarily must weaken, the fraternal tie. Pope beautifully remarks,

“Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,  
The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend:  
The young dismissed to wander earth or air,  
There stops the instinct, and there ends the care:  
The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace;  
Another love succeeds, another race.  
A longer care man's helpless kind demands;  
That longer care contracts more lasting bands.  
Still as one brood, and as another rose,  
These *natural* love maintained, *habitual*, those  
Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,  
At once extend the interest and the love;  
And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise  
That graft benevolence on charities.”

Great care is necessary, however, that when the centre of fraternal charities is gone, and each child becomes himself a centre of similar emotions and impulses, the interest of brothers and sisters in each other do not altogether cease. Brothers and sisters are brothers and sisters still, though they dwell in different quarters of the globe, are each at the head of families of their own, are distinguished in their circumstances by the varieties of affluence and poverty, and have attained to the age of threescore years and ten: and the tie that unites them ought to be *felt* coiling round their hearts, and its influence ought to be seen in producing all those tender offices, which a common relationship to the same parent certainly demands. The next generation may, from various causes, lose their interest in each other. Regard for remote relations becomes, in every country, less and less, according as law extends its protection, commerce diffuses its wealth, and civilization multiplies its comforts. Where clanship is necessary for mutual protection, “the families that spring from one common stock continue to cling to each other for aid, almost as if they lived together under the same roof; it is truly one wide family, rather than a number of families; the history of the tribe in its remote years of warfare and victory, is the history of each individual of the tribe; and the mere remembrance of the exploits of those who fought with one common object, around the representative of their common ancestor is like the feeling of the fraternal or filial relation, prolonged from age to age.” This is not the case, however, in that state of society in which we are placed, where the feeling of affectionate interest, of fraternal love, rarely survives the next generation from the father, and often dies long before that has completed its course. Brothers and sisters ought, however, to keep up, as long as they live, their mutual love. They should not suffer new, and, it is confessed, still nearer relations, to produce a total oblivion of, or alienation from, each other. If dwelling in distant parts of the kingdom, epistolary correspondence should be maintained, sympathy in their mutual joys and sorrows should be cherished, occasional visits, as opportunity might allow, should be paid, and, every thing done, by mutual kind offices, to comfort each other, on the rough and stormy journey of life. If dwelling together in the same town, their intercourse should be such as to constrain

spectators to exclaim, "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity?" There should be that tenderness, which would lead to all the delicate attentions that affection delights to pay, and at the same time that confidence, which would prevent offence from being taken, when these were hindered by accident from being paid. How utterly disgraceful is it to see brothers and sisters dwelling together in the same town; yet living in a state of continual strife, and sometimes in an utter suspension of all intercourse! In such cases, there must be faults on both sides, though not, perhaps, in equal proportions. Those who marry into a family should be very cautious not to carry discord into it. Not unfrequently has it happened, that brothers have been embroiled by their wives, and sisters by their husbands; and they who, till they were married, scarcely ever had an angry word from each other, scarcely ever lived in peace afterwards. Happy and honorable is that family, which though it consist of numerous branches, and those perhaps, nearly all married, and dwelling in the same vicinity, maintains, not, indeed, a state of coldness and formal intercourse, of which the highest praise is that it is free from strife, but a fellowship of sympathy, helpfulness and love!

If, by the vicissitudes of life, and the various allotments of divine Providence, one branch of the family has been more successful than the rest, peculiar care must be exercised, that the latter should not expect too much from him in the way of attention and relief, nor the former yield too little. For any man to be ashamed of his poor brothers and sisters, to treat them with cold neglect or insulting pride, discovers a littleness of mind which deserves contempt, and a depravity of heart which merits our severest indignation: it is at once ingratitude to God and cruelty to man. It must be admitted, however, that it is extremely difficult to meet the demands and satisfy the expectations of poor relations, especially in those cases where their poverty is the fruit of their own indolence or extravagance. They have claims, it is acknowledged, and a good brother or sister will readily allow and cheerfully meet them; but it must be for prudence, under the guidance of affection, to adjust their amount. It is unquestionable, however, that though there are some few who have most indiscreetly impoverished themselves to help a needy, perhaps an undeserving, brother or sis-

ter, the multitude have erred on the other side. Men or women of wealth, who choose to live in celibacy, and who have needy brothers and sisters, are cruel and hard-hearted creatures, if they suffer such relatives to want any thing for their real comfort. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" And what shall be said of those, who, in bequeathing their property, forget their poor relations? The man who passes over a poor brother or sister and their families to endow a hospital, or enrich the funds of a religious society, to which, perhaps, he gave next to nothing while he lived, offers robbery by a burnt-offering.

I have now said all that appears to me to be important on the subject of fraternal duties. Is it necessary to call in the aid of motives to enforce the discharge of such obligations? If so,

Let *your parents' comfort* be a plea with you. How often have the hearts of such been half broken by the feuds of their children! And even where the calamity has not gone to this extent, their cup has been embittered by the wrangles, quarrels, and perpetual strifes of those who ought to have lived in undisturbed affection.

*Your own comfort and honor* are involved in an attention to these duties. You cannot neglect the claims of a brother or a sister, without suffering a diminution in your happiness or your reputation, or both.

*The interests of society* demand of you an attention to fraternal claims. As a son, you learn to be a good subject; as a brother, you learn to be a good citizen. Rebellious children are traitors in the bud; and he who has none of the right feelings of a brother, is training up for a parricide.

And as to *religion*, fraternal duties necessarily arise out of its general principles, are enforced by its prevailing spirit more than by particular precepts, and are recommended by some of its most striking examples; for the first murder which stained the earth with human gore sprung from a want of brotherly affection; and the family in which the Son of God found his loved retreat on the earth was that where, in the person of Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, fraternal love was embodied and adored.

THE END.

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THE

CHRISTIAN FATHER'S PRESENT

TO HIS CHILDREN.

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BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES,  
AUTHOR OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY, THE FAMILY MONITOR, &c. &c.

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"And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." ..... 1 Chron. 28, 29.  
"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." ..... 3 John 3.





## PREFACE.

As a *Christian*, the author of the following volumes believes that there is a state of everlasting happiness prepared beyond the grave for those, and those only, who are partakers of pure and undefiled religion; and, as a *parent*, he will freely confess his supreme solicitude is, that his children, by a patient continuance in well doing, might seek for glory, honor, immortality; and finally possess themselves of eternal life. He is not insensible to the worth of temporal advantages; he is neither cynic nor ascetic; he appreciates the true value of wealth, learning, science, and reputation, which he desires, in such measure as God shall see fit to bestow, both for himself and his children; he has conquered the world, but does not despise it; he resists its yoke as a master, but values its ministrations as a servant. Still, however, he views the present state of sub-lunary affairs as a splendid pageant, the fashion of which passeth away, to give place to the glory which shall never be moved: he looketh not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. It is on this ground that he attaches so much importance to a *religious* education. To those, if such there should be, who imagine that he is too anxious about this matter, and has said too much about it, he has simply to reply, that "he believes, therefore has he spoken." The man who does not make the religious character of his children the supreme end of all his conduct towards them, may profess to believe as a Christian, but certainly acts as an atheist; besides, if *this* end be secured, the most likely step is taken for accomplishing every other; as "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

With these views, the author has embodied in the following volumes his own parental wishes, objects, and pursuits. Much that is here written, has been the subject of his personal converse with his children, and should God spare his life, will still continue to be the topics of his instruction.

What is beneficial to his own family, the author thought might be no less useful to others; and this was another reason which induced him to publish. The multiplication of books of this kind, even if they make small pretensions to classic elegance of composition, is to be looked upon as a benefit, provided they contain sound Scriptural sentiments, and an obvious tendency to produce right moral impressions. Books are sometimes read merely because they are new; it is desirable therefore to gratify this appetite for novelty, when at the same time we can strengthen and build up the moral character by a supply of wholesome and nutritious food.—Nor is it always necessary that new books should contain new topics, or new modes of illustration, any more than it is necessary that there should be a perpetual change in the kinds of food, in order to attain to bodily strength. Whatever varieties may be introduced by the wisdom that is sensual, bread will still remain the staff of life. So there are some primitive truths and subjects, which, whatever novelties and curiosities may be introduced for the gratification of religious taste, must still be repeated, as essential to the formation of religious character.

The author has not selected the *sermonic* form of discussion, because some of his subjects did not admit of it: and also because sermons are perhaps the least inviting species of reading to young people.—

Letters would not have been liable to these objections; but upon the whole, he preferred the form of chapters, in which the style of direct address is preserved. The advantage of this style is obvious; it not only keeps up the reader's interest, but, as every parent who presents these volumes to his children adopts the advice as his own, such young persons, by an easy effort of the imagination, lose sight of the author, and read the language of their own father. If any thing is necessary to secure this effect, beyond the simple act of presenting the book, it might be immediately obtained by an inscription to the child, written by the parent's own hand upon the fly-leaf.

The author scarcely need say that his work is not intended for young people below the age of fourteen. In the composition of the book, a seeming tautology sometimes occurs: what is just touched upon in one place, is more expanded in others: and some subjects are intentionally repeated. To give additional interest to the volumes, numerous extracts, and some anecdotes are introduced, which tend to relieve the dullness of didactic composition, and prevent the tedium of unvarying monotony.

In the references which the author has given to books, both in the chapter on that subject, and in marginal notes, he does not wish to be considered as laying down, much less as limiting for young people, a course of reading; but as simply directing them to *some* works, which, among others, ought by no means to be neglected.

Once more let it be stated, and stated with all possible emphasis, that the chief design of this work, is to form the religious character of its readers, and to implant those virtues, which shall live, and flourish, and dignify, and delight, infinite ages after every object that is dear to avarice or pride, to learning or science, to taste or ambition, shall have perished in the conflagration of the universe.

Edgbaston, April 10, 1824.

### AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS—It is a situation of tremendous responsibility to be a parent: for the manner in which you discharge the duties of this relation, you must give an account in that awful day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be judged by Jesus Christ. With every babe that God intrusts to your care, he in effect sends the solemn injunction, "Take this child, and bring it up for me;" and at the final audit, will inquire, in what manner you have obeyed the command. It will not then be sufficient to plead the strength of your affection, nor the ceaseless efforts to which it gave rise; for if these efforts were not directed to a right end, if all your solicitude was lavished upon inferior objects, you will receive the rebuke of him that sitteth upon the throne.

It is of infinite importance that you should contemplate your children in their proper point of view. They are *animal* beings, and therefore it is highly proper that you should use every effort to provide them with suitable food, clothing, habitations, and every thing else that can conduce to the comfort of their present existence. They are *social* beings, and therefore it is important that you should qualify them to enjoy the comforts and discharge the duties of social life. They are *rational* beings, and therefore it is your duty to furnish them with every possible advantage for the culture of their minds. But



if you look no farther than this, you leave out of sight the grandest and most interesting lights in which they can be seen, and will of course neglect the most important of your duties towards them; for they are *immortal* beings; the stamp of eternity is upon them: everlasting ages are before them. They are like all the rest of the human race, depraved, guilty, and condemned creatures, and consequently in danger of eternal misery. Yet are they, through the mercy of God, and the mediation of Christ, creatures capable of attaining to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. Looking upon them in this light, and this is the light in which you profess to contemplate them, say, what should be your chief anxiety concerning them, and what your conduct towards them?

Recognising in your children, beings placed in this world in a state of probation, and hastening to eternal happiness or torment, will you be contented to seek for them any thing short of *eternal salvation*? Even a deist, who has any belief of a future state of reward and punishment, cannot act consistently, unless he is supremely desirous of the everlasting welfare of his children. None but an avowed atheist can, with the least propriety, fix his aim lower for his children, than the possession of a happy immortality. But in the case of a *Christian parent*, it is in the highest degree inconsistent, absurd, cruel, and wicked, ever to lose sight of this even for an instant, in the arrangements which he makes for his family, or the manner of conducting himself towards them. Do you really believe in the ruin of the human race by sin, and their recovery by Christ; in the existence of such states as heaven and hell; in the necessity of a life of faith and holiness, in order to escape the one and secure the other?—then act up to these solemn convictions, not only in reference to your own salvation, but to the salvation of your children. Let a supreme desire of their immortal interests be at the bottom of your conduct, and be interwoven in all your parental habits. Let them have, in the fullest sense of the term, a *Christian education*. Act towards them, and for them, so that you shall be able to say to them, however they may turn out, “I take you to record that I am clear from your blood.”

But my principal object in this address is, to point out what appear to me to be the most prevailing obstacles to success, in the religious education of children.

That in many cases the means employed by Christian parents for their children's spiritual welfare are unsuccessful, is a melancholy fact, established by abundant, and, I fear, accumulating evidence. I am not now speaking of those families—and are there indeed such?—where scarcely a semblance of domestic piety or instruction is to be found, where no family altar is seen, no family prayer is heard, no parental admonition is delivered! What! this cruel, wicked, ruinous neglect of their children's immortal interest in the families of professors!! Monstrous inconsistency! Shocking dereliction of principle! No wonder that their children go astray. This is easily accounted for. Some of the most profligate young people that I know, have issued from such households. Their prejudices against religion, and their enmity against its forms, are greater than those of the children of avowed worldlings. Inconsistent, hypocritical, negligent professors of religion, frequently excite in their sons and daughters an unconquerable aversion and disgust against piety, which seems to inspire them with a determination to place themselves at the farthest possible remove from its influence.

But I am now speaking of the failure of a religious education, where it has been, in some measure, carried on; instances of which are by no means unfrequent. Too often do we hear the echo of

David's sorrowful complaint uttered by the distressed and disappointed Christian father, “Although my house be not so with God.” Too often do we see the child of many prayers and many hopes forgetting the instructions he has received, and running with the multitude to do evil. Far be it from me to add affliction to affliction, by saying that this is to be traced, in every case, to parental neglect.—I would not thus pour as it were nitre and vinegar upon the bleeding wounds, with which filial impiety has lacerated many a father's mind. I would not thus cause the wretched parent to exclaim, “Reproach hath broken the heart, already *half* broken by my child's misconduct.” I know that in many cases no blame whatever is to be thrown on the parent; but it was the depravity of the child alone, which nothing could subdue but the power of the Holy Ghost, that led to the melancholy result. The best possible scheme of Christian education, most judiciously directed, and most perseveringly maintained, has, in some cases, totally failed. God is a sovereign, and he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Still, however, there is, in the order of means, a tendency in a religious education, to secure the desired result; and God usually does bless, with his saving influence, such efforts. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” This is certainly true, as a general rule, though there are many exceptions from it.

I shall now lay before you the principal obstacles to success in religious education, as they strike my mind.

First.—*It is frequently too negligently and capriciously maintained, even where it is not totally omitted.*

It is obvious, that if at all attended to, it should be attended to with anxious earnestness, systematic order, and perpetual regularity. It should not be taken up as a dull form, an unpleasant drudgery, but as a matter of deep and delightful interest.—The heart of the parent should be entirely and obviously engaged. A part of every returning Sabbath should be spent by him, surrounded by his filial charge; and it should be embodied, more or less, with the whole habit of parental conduct.—The father may lead the usual devotions at the family altar: the mother may join with him in teaching their children catechism, hymns, Scripture; but if this be unattended by serious admonition, visible anxiety, and strenuous effort to lead their children to think seriously on religion, as a matter of infinite importance, little good can be expected. A cold, formal, capricious system of religious instruction is rather likely to create prejudice against religion, than prepossession in its favor.

Then, again, a religious education should be *consistent*—it should extend to *every thing* that is likely to assist in the formation of character. It should not be mere abstract tuition, but should be a complete whole. It should select the schools, the companions, the amusements, the books of youth; for if it do nothing more than merely teach a form of sound words to the understanding, and to the memory, while the impression of the heart, and the formation of the character are neglected, very little is to be expected from such efforts. A handful of seed, scattered now and then upon the ground, without order or perseverance, might as rationally be expected to produce a good crop, as a mere lukewarm, capricious, religious education to be followed by true piety. If the parent is not *visibly in earnest*, it cannot be expected that the child will be so. Religion, by every Christian parent, is theoretically acknowledged to be the most important thing in the world; but if in practice the father appears a thousand times more anxious for his son to be a good

scholar than a real Christian, and the mother more solicitous for the daughter to be a good dancer or musician, than a child of God, they may teach what they like in the way of good doctrine, but they are not to look for genuine piety as the result: this can only be expected where it is really taught and inculcated, as *the one thing needful*.

Secondly.—*The relaxation of domestic discipline* is another obstacle in the way of a successful religious education.

A parent is invested by God with a degree of authority over his children, which he cannot neglect to use without being guilty of trampling under foot the institutions of heaven. Every family is a community, the government of which is strictly despotic, though not tyrannical. Every father is a sovereign, though not an oppressor: he is a legislator, and not merely a counsellor; and his will is law, not merely advice. He is to command, to restrain, to punish; and children are required to obey: he is, if necessary, to threaten, to rebuke, to chastise; and they are to submit with reverence. He is to decide what books shall be read, what companions invited, what engagements formed, and how time is to be spent. If he sees any thing wrong, he is not to interpose merely with the timid, feeble, ineffectual protest of Eli, "Why do ye thus, my sons?" but with a firm, though mild prohibition. He must *rule* his own house; and by the whole of his conduct, make his children feel that obedience is his due and his demand.

The want of discipline, wherever it exists, will be supplied by confusion and domestic anarchy.—Every thing goes wrong in the absence of this. A gardener may sow the choicest seeds; but if he neglect to pluck up weeds, and prune wild luxuriances; he must not expect to see his flowers grow, or his garden flourish; and so a parent may deliver the best instructions, but if he do not, by discipline, eradicate evil tempers, correct bad habits, repress rank corruptions, nothing excellent can be looked for. He may be a good prophet, and a good priest, but if he be not also a good *king*, all else is vain. When once a man breaks his sceptre, or lends it to his children as a plaything, he may give up his hopes of success from a religious education.

I have seen the evil resulting from a want of discipline in innumerable families, both amongst my brethren in the ministry, and others. Frightful instances of disorder and immorality are now present to my mind, which I could almost wish to forget. The misfortune in many families is, that this regimen is unsteady and capricious, sometimes carried even to tyranny itself, at others relaxed into a total suspension of law; so that the children are at one time trembling like slaves, at others revolting like rebels; at one time groaning beneath an iron yoke, at others rioting in a state of lawless liberty. This is a most mischievous system, and its effects are generally what might be expected.

In some cases, discipline commences too late, in others it ceases too early. A father's magisterial office is coeval with his parental relation. A child as soon as he can reason, should be made to feel that obedience is due to parents; for if he grow up to boyhood before he is subject to the mild rule of parental authority, he will, very probably, like an untamed bullock, resist the yoke. On the other hand, as long as children continue beneath the parental roof, they are to be subject to the rules of domestic discipline. Many parents greatly err, in abdicating the throne in favor of a son or daughter, because the child is *becoming* a man or a woman. It is truly pitiable to see a boy or girl of fifteen, returning from school to sow the seeds of revolt in the domestic community, acting in opposition to parental authority, till the too compliant father gives

the reins of government into filial hands, or else by his conduct declares his children to be in a state of independence. I am not advising a contest for power; for where a child has been accustomed to obey, even from an infant, the yoke of obedience will al- ways, at least generally, be light and easy; if not, and a rebellious temper should begin to show itself early, a judicious father should be on his guard, should suffer no encroachments on his prerogative, while at the same time the increased power of his authority, like the increased pressure of the atmosphere, should be felt without being seen, and this will make it irresistible.

Thirdly.—*Undue severity*, in the other extreme, is as injurious as unlimited indulgence.

If injudicious fondness has slain its tens of thousands, unnecessary harshness has destroyed its thousands. By an authority which cannot err, we are told that the cords of love are the bands of a man. There is a plastic power in love. The human mind is so constituted as to yield readily to the influence of kindness. Men are more easily led to their duty, than driven to it; a child, says an eastern proverb, may lead the elephant by a single hair. You remember, and perhaps have often seen verified, the old apologue of the Sun, the Wind, and the Traveller. Love seems so essential an element of the parental character, that there is something shockingly revolting, not only in a cruel, not only in an unkind, not only in a severe, but even in a cold-hearted father. Study the parental character as it is exhibited in that most exquisitely touching moral picture, the parable of the Prodigal Son. When a father governs entirely by cold, bare, uncovered authority; by mere commands, prohibitions and threats; by frowns untempered with smiles; when the friend is never blended with the legislator, nor authority modified with love; when his conduct produces only a servile fear in the hearts of his children, instead of a generous affection; when he is served from a dread of the effects of disobedience, rather than from a sense of the pleasure of obedience; when he is dreaded in the family circle as a frowning spectre, rather than hailed as the guardian angel of its joys; when even accidents raise a storm, and faults a hurricane of passion in his bosom; when offenders are driven to equivocation and lying, with the hope of averting by concealment those severe corrections which disclosure always entails; when unnecessary interruptions are made to innocent enjoyments; when, in fact, nothing of the father, but every thing of the tyrant, is seen; can we expect religion to grow in such soil as this? Yes, as rationally as we may look for the tenderest hot-house plant to thrive amidst the rigors of eternal frost.

It is useless for such a father to teach religion; he chills the soul of his pupils; he hardens their hearts against impression; he prepares them to rush with eager haste to their ruin, as soon as they have thrown off the yoke of their bondage; and to employ their liberty, as affording the means of unbridled gratification. Like a company of African slaves, they are first tortured by their thralldom, and by that very bondage, trained up to convert their emancipation into a means of destruction.

Let parents then, in all their conduct, blend the lawgiver and the friend, temper authority with kindness, and realize in their measure that representation of Deity which Dr. Watts has given us, where he says,

"Sweet majesty and awful love,  
Sit smiling on his brow."

In short, let them so act, that their children shali be convinced that their law is holy, and their com-



ment is holy and just and good; and that to be so governed is to be blessed.

Fourthly.—*The inconsistent conduct of parents themselves*, is a frequent and powerful obstacle to success in religious education.

Example has been affirmed to be omnipotent, and its power, like that of gravitation, is always in proportion to the nearness of the attracting body; what then must be the influence of *parental example*? Now as I am speaking of *religious* parents, it is of course assumed that they do exhibit, in some measure, the reality of religion: but may not the reality often be seen where much of the beauty of true godliness is obscured, just as the sun is beheld when his effulgence is quenched in a mist; or as a lovely prospect is seen through a haze, which, though it leave its extent uncovered, veils all its beauty. Religion may be seen in dim outline by the children in their parents' conduct, but it is attended with so many minor inconsistencies, such a mist of imperfections, that it presents little to conciliate their regard or raise their esteem. There is so much worldly-mindedness, so much conformity to fashionable follies, so much irregularity of domestic piety, such frequent sallies of unchristian temper, such insupportable grief and querulous complaint under the trials of life, such frequent animosities towards their fellow Christians, observable in the conduct of their parents, that they see religion to the greatest possible disadvantage, and the consequence is, that it either lowers their standard of piety, or inspires a disgust towards it altogether.—Parents, as you would wish your instructions and admonitions to your children to be successful, enforce them by the power of a holy example. It is not enough for you to be pious on the whole, but you should be wholly pious; not only to be real disciples, but eminent ones; not only sincere Christians, but consistent ones. Your standard of religion should be very high. To some parents I would give this advice, "*Say less about religion to your children, or else manifest more of its influence.*" Leave off family prayer, or else leave off family sins." Beware how you act, for all your actions are seen at home. Never talk of religion but with reverence: be not forward to speak of the faults of your fellow Christians, and when the subject is introduced, let it be in a spirit of charity towards the offender, and of decided abhorrence of the fault. Many parents have done irreparable injury to their children's minds by a proneness to find out, talk of, and almost rejoice over the inconsistencies of professing Christians. Never cavil at or find fault with the religious exercises of the minister you attend: but rather commend his discourses, in order that your children might listen to them with greater attention. Direct their views to the most eminent Christians, and point out to them the loveliness of exemplary piety. In short, seeing that your example may be expected so much to aid or frustrate your efforts for the conversion of your children, consider "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

Fifthly.—Another obstacle to the success of religious instruction, is sometimes found in the *wild conduct of an elder branch of the family, especially in the case of a dissipated son.*

The elder branches of a family are found, in general, to have considerable influence over the rest, and oftentimes to give the tone of morals to the others: they are looked up to by their younger brothers and sisters; they bring companions, books, amusements into the house; and thus form the character of their juniors. It is of great consequence, therefore, that parents should pay particular attention to their elder children; and if unhappily their habits should be decidedly unfriendly to the reli-

gious improvement of the rest, they should be removed if possible, from the family. One profligate son may lead all his brothers astray. I have seen this, in some cases, most painfully verified. A parent may feel unwilling to send from home an unpromising child, under the apprehension that he will grow worse and worse; but kindness to him in this way, is cruelty to the others. Wickedness is contagious, especially when the diseased person is a brother.

Sixthly.—*Bad companions* out of the house, counteract all the influence of religious instruction delivered at home.

A Christian parent must ever be on the alert to watch the associations which his children are inclined to form. On this subject, I have said much to the young themselves in the following work: but it is a subject which equally concerns the parent.—One ill chosen friend of your children's may undo all the good you are the means of doing at home.—It is impossible for you to be sufficiently vigilant on this point. From their very infancy, encourage them to look up to you as the selectors of their companions; impress them with the necessity of this, and produce a habit of consulting you at all times. Never encourage an association which is not likely to have a decidedly friendly influence on their religious character. This caution was never more necessary than in the present age. Young people are brought very much together by the religious institutions which are now formed, and although there is a great probability that in such a circle suitable companions will be found, yet it is too much even for charity to believe, that all the active young friends of Sunday Schools, Juvenile Missionary Societies, &c. &c. are fit companions for our sons and our daughters. Encourage them to consider *you* their chief friends; and so act towards them that they shall want no other. On this subject you will find a few remarks, in a note, in the following work.

Seventhly.—*The schisms which sometimes arise in our churches, and embitter the minds of Christians against each other*, have a very unfriendly influence upon the minds of the young.

They see so much that is opposite to the spirit and genius of Christianity in both parties, and enter so deeply into the views and feelings of one of them, that their attention is drawn off from the essentials of religion, or their prejudices raised against them. I look upon this to be one of the most painful and mischievous consequences of ecclesiastical contentions.

Eighthly.—*The neglect of young persons by our churches and their pastors*, is another impediment to the success of domestic religious instruction.

This, however, does not so much appertain to parents in their separate capacity, as in their relation as members of a Christian society, and even in this relation it belongs less to them than to their pastors. There is a blank yet to be filled up in reference to the treatment of the young, who are not in church communion. As a Dissenter, I object of course to the rite of Confirmation as practised in the established church; but we want something, I will not say like it, but in lieu of it. We want something that shall recognise the young, interest them, attract them, guard them.\*

Ninthly.—*The spirit of filial independence*, which is sanctioned by the habits, if not by the opinions of the age, is another hindrance, and the last which I shall mention, to the good effect contemplated and desired by a religious education.

The disposition, which is but too apparent in this

\* See an excellent sermon by the Rev. J. Bennett, entitled "The duties of the Churches towards the Rising Generation."

age, to enlarge the privileges of the children by diminishing the prerogative of their parents, is neither for the comfort of the latter nor for the well-being of the former. Rebellion against a justly constituted authority can never be in any case a blessing, and all wise parents, together with all wise youth, will unite in supporting that just paternal authority, which however the precocious manhood of some might feel to be an oppression, the more natural and slowly approaching maturity of others, will acknowledge to be a blessing. Children who find the parental yoke a burden, are not very likely to look upon that of Christ as a benefit.\*

Such, my dear friends, as they appear to my mind, are the principal obstacles to the success of those

efforts which are carried on by many for the religious education of their children. Seriously consider them: and having looked at them, endeavor to avoid them. Survey them as the mariner does the flame of the light-house, for the purpose of avoiding the rock on which it is placed. Recognise your children, as every Christian parent should do not only as animal, rational, social beings, but as immortal creatures, lost sinners, beings invited to eternal life through the mediation of Christ; and while you neglect not any one means that can promote their comfort, reputation, and usefulness in this world, concentrate your chief solicitude, and employ your noblest energies in a scriptural, judicious, persevering scheme of *religious* education.—“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

\* There is a very useful sermon of Dr. Winter's on the subject of this address.



# CHRISTIAN FATHER'S PRESENT.

## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE ANXIETY OF A CHRISTIAN PARENT FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF HIS CHILDREN.

MY DEAR CHILDREN—Never did I pass a more truly solemn or interesting moment, than that in which my first born child was put into my arms, and I felt that I was a father. A new solicitude was then produced in my bosom, which every succeeding day has tended to confirm and strengthen. I looked up to heaven, and breathed over my babe the petition of Abraham for his son, "O that Ishmael might live before thee." Recognising, in the little helpless being which had been so lately introduced into our world, a creature, born for eternity, and who, when the sun was extinguished, would be still soaring in heaven, or sinking in hell, I retired to the closet of private devotion, and solemnly dedicated the child to that God, who had given me the precious boon; and earnestly prayed, that whatever might be his lot in this world, he might be a partaker of true piety, and numbered with the saints in glory everlasting.

During the days of your infancy I watched you, together with your sainted mother, with all the fondness of a parent's heart. We have smiled upon you when you were slumbering in healthful repose; we have wept over you when tossed with feverish restlessness and pain; we have been the delighted spectators of your childish sports; we have witnessed with pleasure the development of your intellectual powers; and have often listened with somewhat of pride, to the commendations bestowed upon your persons and attainments;—but, amidst all, one deep solicitude took hold on our minds, which nothing could either divert or abate, and that is, a deep anxiety for your spiritual welfare—for your religious character.

You cannot doubt, my children, that your parents love you. We have, in all your recollections, a witness to this. We have, as you know, done every thing to promote your welfare, and, so far as was compatible with this object, your pleasure also.—We have never denied you a gratification which our duty and ability allowed us to impart; and if at any time we have been severe in reproof, even *this* was a more awful form of love. We have spared no expense in your education; in short, love, an intense love, of which you can at present form no adequate conception, has been the secret spring of all our conduct towards you; and as the strongest proof, and purest effort of our affection, we wish you to be partakers of true piety. Did we not cherish this anxiety, we should feel that, amidst every other expression of regard, we were acting towards you a most cruel and unnatural part. Genuine love desires and seeks for the objects on which it is fixed, the greatest benefits of which they are capable; and as you have a capacity to serve, and enjoy, and glorify God by real religion, how can we love you in reality, if we do not covet for you this high and holy distinction? We should feel that our love had exhausted itself upon trifles, and had let go objects of immense, infinite, eternal consequence, if it were not to concentrate all its prayers, desires, and efforts, in your personal religion.

Almost every parent has some one object which he desires above all others on behalf of his children. Some are anxious that their offspring may shine as warriors; others, that theirs may be surrounded with the milder radiance of literary, scientific, or commercial fame. *Our* supreme ambition for you is, that whatever situation you occupy, you may adorn it with the beauties of holiness, and discharge its duties under the influence of Christian principle. Much as we desire your respectability in life, and we will not conceal our hope that you will occupy no mean place in society, yet we would rather see you in the most obscure, and even menial situation, provided you were partakers of true piety, than see you on the loftiest pinnacle of the temple of fame, the objects of universal admiration, if at the same time your hearts were destitute of the fear of God. We might, indeed, in the latter case, be tempted to watch your ascending progress, and hear the plaudits with which your elevation was followed, with something of a parent's vanity; but when we retired from the dazzling scene to the seat of serious reflection, the spell would be instantly broken, and we should sorrowfully exclaim, "Alas! my son, what is all this, in the absence of religion, but soaring high to have the greater fall!"

You must be aware, my dear children, that all our conduct towards you, has been conducted upon these principles. Before you were capable of receiving instruction, we presented ceaseless prayer to God for your personal piety. As soon as reason dawned, we poured the light of religious instruction upon your mind, by the aid of familiar poetry, catechisms, and conversation. You cannot remember the time when these efforts commenced. How often have you retired with us, to become the subjects of our earnest supplications at the throne of grace.—You have been the witnesses of our agony for your eternal welfare. Have we not instructed, warned, admonished, encouraged you, as we laid open to your view, the narrow path which leadeth to eternal life? Have we not been guided by this object in the selection of schools for your education, companions for your amusement, books for your perusal? Has not this been so interwoven with all our conduct, that if at any time you had been asked the question, "What is the chief object of your parents' solicitude on your account," you must have said at once "For my being truly pious?" Yes, my children, this is most strictly true. At home, abroad, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, this is the ruling solicitude of our bosoms.

How intently have we marked the development of your character, to see if our fondest wishes were likely to be gratified. We have observed your deportment under the sound of the gospel, and when you have appeared listless and uninterested, it has been as wormwood in our cup; while, on the other hand, when we have seen you, listening with attention, quietly wiping away the tear of emotion, or retiring pensive and serious to your closet, we have rejoiced more than they which find great spoil.—When we have looked on the conduct of any pious youth, we have uttered the wish, "O that my child were like him!" and have directed your attention to his character, as that which we wished you to make the model of yours. When, on the other

hand, we have witnessed the behavior of some prodigal son, who has been the grief of his parents, the thought has been like a dagger to our heart, "What if my child should turn out thus!"

1. Now we cherish all this solicitude on *our own account*. We candidly assure you, that nothing short of this will make us happy. Your piety is the only thing that will make us rejoice that we are parents. How can we endure to see our children choosing any other ways than those of wisdom, and any other path than that of life? How could we bear the sight, to behold you travelling along the broad road which leadeth to destruction, and running with the multitude to do evil? "O God, hide us from this sad spectacle, in the grave, and ere that time comes, take us to our rest." But how would it embitter our last moments, and plant our dying pillow with thorns, to leave you on earth in an unconverted state; following us to the grave, but not to heaven. Or should you be called to die before us, and take possession of the tomb in our names, how could we stand at the dreadful post of observation, darker every hour, without one ray of hope for you, to cheer our wretched spirits! How could we sustain the dreadful thought, which in spite of ourselves would sometimes steal across the bosom, that the very next moment after you had passed beyond our kind attentions, you would be received to the torments which know neither end nor mitigation! And when you had departed under such circumstances, what could heal our wounds, or dry our tears!

Should you become truly pious, this circumstance will impart to our bosoms a felicity which no language could enable me to describe. It will sweeten all our intercourse with you, establish our confidence, allay our fears, awaken our hopes. If we are prosperous, it will delight us to think that we are not acquiring riches for those who will squander it on their lusts, but who will employ it for the glory of God when we are in the dust. Or, if we are poor, it will cheer us to reflect, that though we cannot leave you the riches of this world, we see you in possession of the favor of God, and that portion, which after comforting you on earth, will enrich you through eternity. My dear children, if you are anxious to comfort the hearts of your parents, if ye would fulfil our joy; if ye would repay all our labor, anxiety, affection; if ye would most effectually discharge all the obligations which you cannot deny you owe us, *Fear God, and choose the ways of religion*: this, this only, will make us happy.

2. We cherish this solicitude on behalf of the church, and the cause of God.

We are every year conveying to the tombs of their fathers, some valued and valuable members of the Christian church. We are perpetually called to witness the desolations of the last enemy in the garden of the Lord. How often do we exclaim over the corpse of some eminent Christian and benefactor, "Departed saint, how heavy the loss we have sustained by thy removal to a better state!—Who now shall fill up thy vacant seat, and bless like thee both the church and the world?" My children, under these bereavements, to whom should we look but to you? To whom should we turn but to the children of the kingdom, for subjects of the kingdom? You are the property of the church. It has a claim upon you. Will ye not own it, and discharge it? Must we see the walls of the spiritual house mouldering away, and you, the rightful materials with which it should be repaired, withheld? We love the church, we long for its prosperity, we pray for its increase, and it cannot but be deeply distressing to us to witness the ravages of death, and, at the same time, to see the want of religion in those young persons, whose parents, during their

life, filled places of honor and usefulness in the fellowship of the faithful.

We are anxious for your being pious that you might be the instruments of blessing the world by the propagation of religion. The moral condition of the world is too bad for description. If it be ever improved, this must be done by Christians. True piety is the only reformer of mankind. A spirit of active benevolence has happily risen up, rich in purposes and means, for the benefit of the human race. But the men, in whose bosoms it now lives and moves, are not immortal upon earth; they too must sleep in dust, and who shall succeed them at their post and enter into their labors? Who will catch their falling mantle, and carry on their glorious undertaking for the salvation of millions?—If it be ever done, it must be done of course by those who are now rising into life. The propagation of religion to the next generation, and to distant nations, depends on you, and others of your age.—While I write, the groans of creation are ascending; and future ages are rising up to plead with you, that you would bow to the influence of religion, as the only way of extending it to them.

3. But we are chiefly anxious, after all, on *your account*.

My children, the anxiety which we feel on this head, is far too intense for language. Here I may truly say, "poor is thought, and poor expression." If piety were to be obtained for you only by purchase, and I were rich in the possession of worlds, I would beggar myself to the last farthing to render you a Christian, and think the purchase cheap.—"Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." As I shall have more than one chapter on the advantages of piety, it will not be necessary to enlarge upon them here, any further than to say, that true godliness will save you from much present danger and inconvenience, promote your temporal interests, prepare you for the darkest scenes of adversity, comfort you on a dying bed, and finally conduct you to everlasting glory. The want of it will ensure the reverse of all this. Sooner or later such a destitution will bring misery on earth, and be followed with eternal torments in hell.

What then, my children, are all worldly acquisitions and possessions without piety? What are the accomplishments of taste, the elegances of wealth, wreaths of fame, but as the fragrant and many-colored garland which adorns the miserable victim about to be sacrificed at the shrine of this world? Original genius, a vigorous understanding, a well stored mind, and all this adorned by the most amiable temper, and most insinuating address, will neither comfort under the trials of life, nor save their lovely possessor from the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched. Oh! no; they may qualify for earth, but not for heaven. Alas, alas! that such estimable qualities should all perish for want of that piety, which alone can give immortality and perfection to the excellences of the human character!

Can you wonder then at the solicitude we feel for your personal religion, when such interests are involved in this momentous concern?

## CHAPTER II.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS WITH WHICH WE SHOULD ENTER UPON AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF RELIGION.

RELIGION is a subject of a spiritual and moral nature, and therefore requires another and a different frame of mind to that which we carry to a topic purely intellectual.



The first disposition essentially necessary, is a *deep seriousness*.

Religion is the very last thing in the universe with which we should allow ourselves to trifle. Nothing can be more shocking and incongruous than that flippancy and inconsiderateness, with which some people treat this dread theme. When Uzzah put forth his hand, *in haste* to support the ark, his life paid the forfeit of his temerity; and if the man, who takes up his Bible to inquire into the meaning of its contents, with a frivolous and volatile temper, do not suffer the same penalty, it is not because the action is less criminal or less dangerous, but because God has now removed the punishment a little farther distant from the sin. I cannot conceive of any thing more likely to provoke God to give a person up to the bewildering influence of his own inherent depravity, and consequently to a confused and erroneous perception of religious truth than this temper. To see a person approaching the oracle of God with the same levity as a votary of fashion and folly enters a place of amusement, is indeed revolting to taste, to say nothing of more sacred feelings. Religion enthroned behind the veil in the temple of truth, and dwelling amidst the brightness which the merely curious eye cannot bear to look upon, refuses to unfold her glories, or discover her secrets, to the volatile mind; and delivers to every one who draws near to her abode, the admonition of Jehovah to Moses, "Put off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The subjects treated of by religion, are of the most awfully important nature. Every thing about it is serious. The eternal God, in every view of his nature and operations—the Lord Jesus Christ in his sufferings and death—the soul of man, in its ruin and salvation—the solemnities of judgment—the mysteries of eternity—the felicities of heaven—the torments of hell, are all involved in the mighty comprehension of religion. Should *such* themes be ever touched with irreverence? My dear children, I warn you against the too common practice of reducing to the level of mere intellectual theories, and of treating with the same indifference as the systems of philosophy, that sacred volume, which, to use the words of Locke, "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its contents." Do not forget, then, that the very first requisite, not only in religion itself, but also in that frame of mind, which enables us to understand its nature, is *seriousness*.

2. A *great solicitude to be guided aright*, is the next disposition, and nearly allied to the former.

Eternal consequences hang upon this question.—As we mistake it, or understand it, we shall travel onward to heaven or hell. An inquiry of such importance should, of course, be urged with the deepest anxiety. It might be rationally expected, that events so awfully tremendous as death and judgment; a subject so deeply interesting as whether we shall spend eternal ages, in torments or in bliss, could in no possible case, and in no constitution of mind whatever, fail of exciting the most serious apprehension and concern. And yet there are multitudes, who have talked a thousand times about religion, but yet have never had in all their lives one hour's *real solicitude* to know whether their views of its nature are correct. Is it to be wondered then, that so many remain in ignorance, or plunge into error?

3. *Docility*, or a teachable disposition, is of great consequence.

Our Lord laid great emphasis on this, when he said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Children, when they first go to school, have a sense of their own ignorance; they have nei-

ther prepossessions nor prejudices; they present their unfurnished minds to their teachers to receive, with implicit confidence, all that they are taught. Docility is essential to improvement in every thing; for if a child go to school puffed up with high notions of his own attainments, imagining that he knows as much as his master can teach him, and with a disposition to cavil at every thing that is communicated; in this case, improvement is out of the question; the avenues of knowledge are closed. In nothing is docility more necessary than in religion, where the subject is altogether beyond the cognizance of the senses, and the discoveries of reason. Christianity is purely and exclusively matter of revelation. Of course, all our knowledge on this topic must be derived from the Bible; to the right understanding of which, we must carry the same consciousness of our ignorance, the same destitution of prejudice and prepossession, the same implicit submission of the understanding, as the child on his first going to school does to his instructor. We must go to the word of God with these convictions in our mind, "This is the master, from whom I, who know nothing, am most implicitly to receive all things. My teacher is infallible and I am not to cavil at his instructions, however in some things they may transcend my ability to comprehend them."

Yes, the Bible, the Bible alone, is the infallible teacher in religious matters, from whose authority there does and can lie no appeal; before whose solemn dicta reason must bow in humble silence, to learn and to obey. This is docility, by which I mean, not a supple disposition to believe what others believe, or to adopt the creed which they would impose upon us; no, this is surrendering our understanding to be enslaved by human authority; but teachableness, means going direct to the master, with this determination, whatever he teaches I will believe, be it so sublime, so humiliating, so novel, and, to my present limited capacities, so incomprehensible as it may.

Are we, then, to exclude reason from the business of religion? By no means. It would be as absurd to attempt it, as it would be impossible to accomplish it. The whole affair of piety is a process of reason: but then it is reason submitting itself to the guidance of revelation. Reason bears the same relation to religion, and performs the same office, as it does in the system of jurisprudence: it examines the evidence, by which a law is proved to be an enactment of the legislature; interprets according to the known use of terms and phrases, its right meaning, and then submits to its authority. Thus in matters of religion, its province is to examine the evidences by which the Bible is proved to be a revelation from God; having done this, it is to ascertain, according to the fixed use of language, its true meaning; and then to submit to its authority, by believing whatever it reveals, and obeying whatever it enjoins. This is what we mean by prostrating our reason before the tribunal of revelation, than which surely nothing can more accord with the design of the Bible, or the ignorance of the human mind.

But, suppose reason should meet with palpable contradictions in the word of God, is she to believe them? This is putting a case which cannot happen, since it is supposing that God will give his sanction to a lie. There can be no contradictions in the word of God; the thing is impossible. But still it will be replied, Is not one kind of evidence for the divine authority of revelation, derived from its contents? and if so, may not reason make the nature of a doctrine a test of its truth? At best this is but a secondary species of evidence, and cannot oppose the primary kind of proof. If it cannot be

proved that a doctrine is really an interpolation, and there is at the same time all the evidence that the case admits of, that it is a part of divine revelation, no difficulty in the way of understanding its meaning, no seeming mystery in its terms, should lead us to reject it; we must receive it and wait for further light to understand it.

Revelation is the sun, reason the eye which receives its beams, and applies them to all the purposes of life, for which, in ceaseless succession they flow in upon us; and it can no more be said that revelation destroys or degrades reason, by guiding it, than it can be said the solar orb extinguishes the power of vision, by directing its efforts.

Docility then, my dear children, by which I mean a submission of the human understanding, in matters of religion, to the word of God, is essential to all true piety. I insist upon this with more earnestness, because it is easy to perceive, that the tendency of the present age is in an opposite direction. A haughty and flippant spirit has arisen, which, under the pretext of freedom of inquiry, has discovered a restless propensity to throw off the authority of divine truth; a spirit more disposed to teach the Bible than to be taught by it; to speculate upon what it should be, than to receive it as it is; a spirit which would receive the morality of the word of God as it finds it, but which is perpetually employed in mending its theology; which, in fact, would subvert the true order of things, and, instead of subjecting reason to revelation, would make reason the teacher, and revelation the pupil. Beware, my children, of this dangerous spirit, which, while it pays flattering compliments to your understanding, is injecting the deadliest poison into your soul.

4. *A prayerful spirit* is essential to a right disposition for inquiring into the nature of true piety.

Religion is an affair so spiritual in its nature, so tremendously important in its consequences, and so frequently misunderstood; and, on the other hand, we ourselves are so liable to be misled in our judgments by the bewildering influence of internal depravity, and external temptation, that it betrays the most criminal indifference, or the most absurd self-confidence, to enter on this subject, without constant earnest supplication for direction to the Father and Fountain of lights.

The religious world is like an immense forest, through which lies the right road to truth and happiness; but besides this, there are innumerable paths running in all directions; every way has its travellers, each traveller thinks he is right, and attempts to prove it, by referring to the map which he carries in his hand. In such circumstances, who, that values his soul or her eternal situation, would not seek for guidance to him who has promised to disclose to us *his* spirit the path of life? When young people trust to the efforts of their own unaided reason, and neglect to ask for the guiding influence of the eternal God, it is matter of little surprise that they are found walking in the paths of error. There is a degree of pride and independence in this, which God often punishes, by leaving them to the seductions of sophistry and falsehood. In addition then, to the greatest seriousness of mind, and the most intense desire after truth, and the most unprejudiced approach to the oracle of Scripture, pray constantly to God to reveal to you the nature of true piety, and to dispose you to embrace it. This is the way appointed by God to obtain it. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto them which are your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." "I will instruct

thee, and teach thee in the way thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."

These, surely with a thousand other passages of similar import, are sufficient to enjoin and encourage the temper I now recommend. I have no hope of those who neglect habitual prayer for divine illumination. I expect to see them left to embrace error for truth, or to content themselves with the mere forms of godliness, instead of its power.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ON RIGHT SENTIMENTS IN RELIGION.

Truth and error, my children, are essentially distinct, and diametrically opposed to each other. It is important to perceive in every case this difference, to embrace the one, and reject the other. To have the judgment misled in its decisions, on any subject, is an evil, which, as rational creatures, we should ever deprecate; but to be mistaken on that subject, where "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," is most fearful, most fatal. To be in error on the topics of literature, science, commerce, history, is a mere inconvenience, at worst a derogation from our mental reputation, or our worldly comfort; but to be fundamentally wrong in religion, is an evil which commences its chief mischief from the day of our death, and perpetuates itself through all the ages of eternity.

I need not inform you, that there prevails an endless variety of opinion on the subject of religion. This circumstance, however, with pious minds it might be a matter of regret, with philosophic ones, is no cause of surprise. Infidels, who profess to study theology in the book of nature, are divided into many sects. Scarcely a subject exists, however plain, and apparently incapable of producing a diversity of opinion, but what is viewed by different men in various lights. What clashing opinions exist among lawyers, concerning the precise meaning of the words of a statute, which was drawn up with the most anxious care to avoid all litigation. That different opinions should exist on the meaning of the Scriptures, is less to be wondered at, when we consider how deeply we are all interested in the matter of revelation, and how apt we are in cases of personal interest, to have our judgments biassed by our feelings. The Bible, if read in heaven by holy angels and spirits made perfect, produces no discordant opinions there. It is to the depravity of human nature, that all religious error is to be traced.

Diversity of sentiment, although confessedly an evil, has been productive of some benefits. It has afforded opportunity for the more vigorous exercise and conspicuous display of Christian charity and forbearance between the various sects; while it is a constant pledge for the purity of the sacred text. As they all profess to draw their opinions from the Bible, they of course maintain a constant and sleepless jealousy over each other's treatment of the word of God. Their opposition to each other converts them all into vigilant guardians of the source of their faith; so that although they have corrupted the *streams* of truth, they have jointly guarded the purity of the *fountain*. The suspicion of any liberties having been taken with the word of God, would be an evil more to be deplored than the existence of a diversity of opinion on the sacred text. While the genuineness of the statute is admitted, and the incorruptibility of the judge is maintained, the wranglings of counsellors cannot subvert the foundations of justice.

Still, however, these opposite sentiments cannot of course be *all* right. Although error is multi-



form, truth is uniform; and it is of infinite consequence, that we should embrace the one and reject the other.

1. Some errors unquestionably exclude a man from salvation. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Now certainly from this language it is evident that salvation is suspended on a belief of the gospel, and of course upon a belief of the true gospel, not on the belief of a false one. If, therefore, what we believe is not the same as that which the word of God reveals, it is not the gospel; and such a faith will not save us. To ascertain with precision what truths are essential to the hope of eternal life, is a very difficult task: to say how far a person may go in error, and yet after all be saved, is what no mortal should presume to do.—When a man, however, disbelieves the Bible to be the word of God; or rejects the doctrine of the atonement; or the justification of the soul by faith; or the necessity of divine influences to renew and sanctify the heart, or the obligation of true holiness; I do not see how such an individual can be saved. He subverts the very foundations of the gospel. *Something* must be believed, as our Lord himself tells us, in order to the possession of everlasting happiness; and if *these* things may be disbelieved, and yet a sinner be saved, it is difficult to find out what there is left for him to believe. If some sentiments, then, are essential to a saving faith, we should be most tremblingly afraid of error; and as it is not for us to say how far an individual may go in error in order to be excluded from the blessings of the gospel, we should certainly be alarmed at the least deviation from the truth, as there is no doubt that one wrong notion prepares the mind for the reception of another. This leads me to observe,

2. That all error has a tendency to pollute the mind, to the degree in which it exists: and therefore must be so far sinful.

"Sanctify them by thy truth," said our Lord, "thy word is truth." Now if truth sanctifies, error must corrupt the mind; except two causes so diametrically opposite to each other, as these are, can be supposed to produce the same effects; which is absurd. Whatever is not truth must be error. Whatever opinion we profess to have received from the word of God, must be classed under one or the other of these heads, and must have some influence or other upon our religious character, as it appears in the sight of God. Wrong sentiments may not produce immorality in the life, but if they corrupt our secret motives; if they render us spiritually proud, and lead us to glory before God; if they make us self-confident and self-dependent; if they cause us to lean to our own understanding; if they lead us to look with contempt upon others; if they keep us from using any means of grace instituted by God, they pollute and injure the mind in the sight of its Omniscient Creator. The least disease in the body, although it be unobserved by others, or yet unfelt by the subject of it, is an injury to the health. It may never come to a fatal attack, or bring on death, but still it is injurious to the frame and it is precisely thus with error in the mind.

All religion is founded upon opinion. It begins with the reception of truth into the understanding: if therefore the whole truth is not received, some part of the moral means appointed for our spiritual improvement is not applied; and if any thing contrary to the truth is received, a cause is in operation upon our minds, opposite to the right one. The order of piety is the order of nature: first, we receive an opinion, then our feelings are excited by the opinion, and then the will resolves to act under the influence of the feelings; as is the opi-

nion, such are the feelings; and as are the feelings, such are the resolutions and the actions. If the opinion, therefore, is wrong, all that follows must be wrong, as to its moral character in the sight of God.

I am aware that a difficulty presents itself here to many young persons, which does not a little perplex them. They see individuals who have embraced the widest extremes of opinion, equally exemplary for the discharge of all the relative and social obligations. They see those who have embraced error, as useful, peaceful, ornamental members of society as those who have received the truth. This is undoubtedly a fact. I know very many who have rejected almost all that is peculiar to Christianity, who are yet amongst the most truly respectable inhabitants of the places in which they live. But this does not disprove my statements, nor in any degree prove that error is innocent and harmless. There are two lights in which the human character is to be viewed; its aspect towards men, and that which it bears towards God. Now I do not mean to say that religious error may in any material, or visible degree, alter the former. A man may be a good subject, neighbor, husband, father, tradesman, master, with *any* or with *no* religious opinions at all. Many infidels have been exemplary in their attention to all the duties of social life. This, however, only proves that error does not always disfigure the character in the sight of man; but we are now more particularly speaking of its aspect towards God. In this view of it there may be a degree of obliquity truly awful, while all is correct towards man. Pride of intellect and of heart; self-sufficiency and self-dependence; a stout and pertinacious resistance to Jehovah's authority; a peremptory refusal to submit to his schemes and will, may all be rife in the soul, while every thing is fair in the exterior. God looketh to the heart; and in his eye the character is decided by the state of the mind. Religion, properly speaking, has to do with God and heaven: it is a right disposition towards God and a spiritual preparation for the celestial state, which, as is perfectly evident, may be wanting, where there are the most splendid social virtues. What I affirm then is, that error, according to the degree in which it exists, must vitiate the character, and deprave the heart in the sight of God; must obstruct the growth and exercise of the religious principle: must unfit the person for divine fellowship here, and for eternal glory hereafter.

Error on religious subjects is not a mere intellectual defect; it is not the result of mere weakness of understanding; its seat is in the heart: it springs from carelessness, prejudice, pride, or some other operation of our depravity, which exerts a bewildering influence on the judgment. We are as certainly accountable to God for it as for evil conduct. It is not to be conceived for a moment, that we are responsible for the exercises of every faculty of the soul, yet not for the understanding, which is the noblest of them all. If a man may *believe* error and yet be innocent, he may *preach* it without guilt; and if this be the case he may employ all his faculties, his talents, his time, his influence, in a direct opposition to the counsels of heaven, and all the revelations of God, and yet be without blame.

If these things are correct, then error is certainly criminal. How can there be a doubt of this? If a man may disbelieve a less important truth, and yet be innocent in that act of his disbelief; then he may reject a more important one, and be equally faultless. If he may discredit one truth, without guilt, then he may discredit two: if two, ten; if ten, half the Bible; if half the Bible, the whole; and yet be innocent, even though he be a deist or atheist, provided he be not immoral, and profess at

the same time to be inquiring after truth. And then why is it said to all the world, "He that believeth not shall be damned?" And what saith the Scripture in other places? "For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth." "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I say now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."\*

These and many more similar texts decide the point, that errors are blameable and destructive; that they spring from the depravity of our nature, and demonstrate a heart, in so far as they prevail, not yet brought into subjection to Christ.

Beware then, my dear children, of that spurious candor, which looks with an equal eye on all opinions; which talks of the innocence of error, and thus diffuses a baleful indifference to the truth.—The adage of Pope, who was a free-thinking Roman Catholic, has been circulated round society by innumerable echoes.

'For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight:  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.'

This you will perceive is an equivocal expression. In one view of it nothing can be more correct; for in every case a right life, that is, right in the scriptural sense of the term, must proceed from a right creed; if, therefore, the life be right, so must also the creed. But the design of the author was to teach that a right life might stand connected with any creed, or no creed, and that, therefore, religious opinions are of no consequence whatever. This you will perceive is the popular and dreadful dogma of infidelity. This bantling of skepticism has been foisted into the Christian world, and profanely baptised by the name of charity. But though it may wear the smiling countenance of this heavenly virtue, it has an infidel heart. If this counterfeit, hollow thing, which dares to take to itself the sacred name of charity, had not renounced the Bible, it would have certainly known, that errors in faith are the offspring of a heart wholly or partially un-

renewed, and as decisive a proof, so far as they prevail, of a want of religion, as an unsanctified life.

Contend earnestly then for the faith once delivered to the saints. I would not have you bigots.—This however, is a vague and plastic term which in the slang of modern infidelity, has been generally applied to every one who attaches importance to religious opinions. If by a bigot, is meant an overweening attachment to sentiments, confessedly of lesser importance than many others; or a blind zeal for opinions, adopted rather from custom than conviction; or a spirit of intolerance, contempt, and persecution, towards those who differ from us in the articles of their belief; if this be bigotry, be you no bigots; abhor and avoid a disposition of this kind. Adopt all your sentiments after a close examination, and upon a full conviction of their truth.—Apportion your zeal for their diffusion upon the scale of their relative importance. Exercise the greatest forbearance and candor towards those who differ from you; but at the same time contend for the articles of your faith as matters of infinite consequence. Defend your opinions with an enlightened, dispassionate, but, at the same time ardent zeal. Insist upon the connection of right sentiments with right feelings, that the former, when really held lead to the latter, and that the latter can never exist without the former. If *this* is what is meant by bigotry, then may you possess it more and more. Shrink not from the charge, if *this* be its meaning in the lips of those who use it. If you partake of true faith and genuine holiness, you must expect that the one will be called enthusiasm, and the other bigotry. Disregard both the accusations, and be not deterred by opprobrious names from the pursuit of eternal life.

Do you ask me what are right sentiments? I reply, search the Scriptures for yourselves, with docility, with prayer, with earnestness. No language can express the infinite importance of entering, without delay, on a deep and solemn examination into these matters.\* Call no man master, but consult the oracle of heaven. One evil, never enough to be deplored, is, that many people do not and will not distinguish. They are pleased with different preachers, who bring as different gospels as the Koran is different from the Bible. They are as ready to put themselves in the way of hearing error as truth, and swallow down whatever comes, provided only it is gracefully administered. Elegant language, good elocution, theatrical attitudes, fascinating imagery, are to them of far more importance than the truth. They are like children rushing into the shop of an apothecary, tasting at random of every vial, and selecting the most imposing in appearance, without the power of distinguishing medicines from poisons. And even where there is some general attachment to right sentiments, in how few cases is this attended with an enlightened ability to defend and enforce them. Our young people do not sufficiently store their minds with the proofs and arguments of the opinions they have adopted. They are satisfied with believing without proof.—This is not the case with the advocates of error.—They are instructed in the whole system of attack and defence. They are skilful in all the manoeuvres of controversy; sophisms, assertions, interrogato-

\* 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12. Gal. i. 8, 9. 2 John 9, 10, 11. Eph. iv. 14. Heb. xiii. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

\* Without pledging myself to approve of every expression contained in the answers of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, I know not where to find a summary of Christian doctrines expressed with so much brevity and so much precision. And although I do not approve of the practice of teaching this catechism to children below the age of twelve, yet all our youth above that age should be acquainted with it as a synopsis of right sentiments in religion.



ries, arguments, are all at their command. The friends of truth are, in these respects, often behind them. Reposing an unlimited confidence in the invulnerable security, and the impregnable strength of their cause, they do not exercise themselves in the use of their arms, and appear sometimes to a disadvantage in skirmishing with their opponents. Be ye not behind them in ability to defend your principles. The truth is of infinite value; may you clearly and comprehensively understand it; cordially and practically believe it; sincerely and ardently love it; and be able both to state it with precision, and to support it with argument.

I cannot conclude this chapter without recommending to you the perusal of an excellent sermon by Dr. Pyc Smith, "On the best Means of obtaining Satisfaction with Regard to the Truth of Religious Sentiments."

After a suitable introduction, he points out, as the common and principal sources of error with regard to divine things, 1. The weakness of our faculties; 2. Our taking up wrong subjects of investigation; 3. And our being affected by the secret influence of sinful dispositions and habits. Under the last particular we find the following impressive observations:

"A sinner," says the wise king of Israel, 'seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not.' The entire want, or the great deficiency, of love, reverence, and devotedness to God, cannot but give a fatal obliquity to our professed researches after truth. Such a state of mind is also invariably connected with wrong affections in relation to ourselves. Instead of an humble, adoring and delightful admiration of the universal perfection of the Most High, there will be pride, self-confidence, and a determination to think at all events favorably of our own dispositions and practices. The judgment of God will be little regarded, and its impression felt very slightly. His supremacy will be the object of secret murmur, or of virtual denial. The heart will rise in dislike against his glorious and unchangeable rectitude, and the necessary obligation of his rational creatures to love him with a perfect heart. His sole and sovereign competency to determine whether at all, to what extent, and in what way and manner, he may be pleased to pardon and bless sinners, will be met by a strong, though perhaps disguised repugnance. And the duty of a cheerful and implicit reliance on the unsullied purity, righteousness and benevolence of Jehovah, notwithstanding the perplexity of present appearances, may indeed be faintly acknowledged in words, but, as to practical effect, it will be treated with neglect, or even with disgust. These, and all other movements of the heart which is under the power of revolt from God, will most certainly darken the understanding, and mislead the judgment; 'evil will be put for good,' and good will be treated as evil."—pp. 14, 15.

"The remedies of the erroneous tendencies of the human heart, are stated to be—1. The maintenance of *right affections* towards the great Author and Revealer of religious truth. 2. A habit of *entire submission* to the authority of the Holy Scriptures. 3. The use of all proper *methods* of acquiring and improving the art of *just reasoning*. 4. Establishment in the evidence and influence of *primary truths*. 5. *Living under the benign and purifying influence of divine truth*. 6. Cautious observations of the effect of *particular sentiments* upon ourselves or others. 7. Keeping in mind, that what has been adopted on impartial inquiry and sufficient evidence, is *not to be lightly given up on the mere occurrence of some new objection*. 8. *Perseverant Prayer*.

"The constant, serious, and affectionate practice of this great and necessary duty, will have the most happy effect in obtaining and preserving the rational

and scriptural satisfaction of the truth of our sentiments, if they be indeed true; and, if otherwise, of leading us to the timely and beneficial discovery of our errors. Prayer elevates the soul above the mists and darkness of this revolved world, and places us under the very shining of the Everlasting Light. It tends to exterminate the greatest obstruction to the entrance of that light, the prepossessions of sin in the heart. It gives vigor and delicacy to the sanctified perceptions. It guides that holy mental sense, which is the characteristic of the real Christian, to the quick discrimination, and the delighted reception of truth and goodness. Through prayer, the hallowed medium of intercourse with heaven the devout mind ascends to its closest enjoyment of communion with the Lord God of truth: and from him descend the returns of prayer, 'every good gift, and every perfect gift.'"—pp. 29, 30.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION.

ALL other questions compared with this, are trifles light as air, or but as the dust of the balance: philosophy, literature, commerce, the arts and the sciences, have, it is true, a relative importance; they soften the manners, alleviate the evils, multiply the comforts of life; yet it is impossible to forget that they are the mere embellishments of a scene, which we must shortly quit; the decorations of a theatre, from which the actors and spectators must soon retire together. But *religion* is of infinite and eternal moment, and then develops, most perfectly, its consequences, in that very moment when the importance of all other subjects terminates for ever. A mistake in this affair, persisted in till death, is followed by effects infinitely dreadful, and of eternal duration. You should bring to this inquiry, therefore, my children, a trembling solicitude to be led in the right way.

Some consider religion as a mere notional assent to certain theological opinions, others as a bare attendance on religious ordinances, others as the performance of moral duties. They are all equally wrong: for instead of being any one of these separately and apart from the rest, it is the union of them all. Religion admits of many definitions in Scripture language. It is "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" or it is "faith working by love;" or it is receiving "that grace which bringeth salvation, and teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world;" or it is "denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following after Christ;" or it is being born again of the Spirit, and sanctified by the truth: or it is the supreme love of Christ, or the habitual fear of God. Each one of these phrases is a definition of true piety; but I shall now adopt another, and represent it as *A right disposition of mind towards God, implanted in our nature by the influence of the Holy Ghost, and exercising itself according to the circumstances in which we are placed.*

Religion is the same in substance in all rational creatures, whether innocent or fallen. In angels, it is still a right disposition towards God; exercising itself in a way of adoration, love, gratitude, and obedience; but not of faith, hope, and repentance, because their circumstances preclude the possibility of these acts. Religion, in reference to fallen man, is a right disposition of mind; but inasmuch as he is a sinful and ruined creature, yet a creature capable of salvation through the mediation of Christ, it must necessarily include in it, in addition to the feelings of angelic piety, all those mental exercises

and habits which are suitable to a state of guilt, and a dispensation of mercy.

Let us take each part of the definition by itself.

I. *God is the primary object of religion.*

It is not enough that we perform our duties towards our fellow-creatures; but to be truly pious, we must perform our duty towards God. We may be exemplary and even punctilious in discharging every social obligation; we may be moral in the usual acceptation of the term—honorable, amiable, and yet may be all this, without one single spark of true piety; because in all this there may be no reference whatever to God. An atheist may be all this. Until, therefore, the mind is rightly affected towards God, there is no religion, because *He* is the direct and primary object of it. It is something perfectly independent, as to its essence, upon all the social relations. If a man were wrecked, like Alexander Selkirk, on an uninhabited island, where there was no room, of course, for loyalty, honesty, kindness, mercy, justice, truth, or any of the *relative* virtues, the claims of piety would follow him to this dreary and desolate abode; and even there, where he should never hear the sweet music of speech, nor look on the human face divine, he would still be under the obligations of piety; even there one voice would be heard breaking the silence around him, with the solemn injunction of Scripture, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Bear in recollection then, my children, that God as he is revealed in his word, is the direct and primary object of all true piety; and that the most exemplary discharge of the social duties can be no substitute for that reverence and love and gratitude and obedience which we owe to him.

II. Religion is a *right disposition of mind* towards God. It is not merely a thing of outward forms and ceremonies, but of the *heart*. It is more than an external action, it is a disposition; not only a performance, but a taste; not an involuntary or compulsory pursuit, but a voluntary and agreeable one. That religion must be an internal principle, an affair of the soul, is evident from the nature of its object, of whom it is said, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in *spirit* and in truth." As the heart lies all open to him, unless there be religion there, he scorns the uplifted hand and bended knee. It is evident from reason, that piety must have its seat in the breast; for what spiritual excellence can there be in an action, which is either performed from a bad motive, or from none at all. It is evident from revelation. Read such injunctions as these. "My son, give me thine *heart*." "Get thee a new *heart*." "Thy *heart* is not right in the sight of God." "Be renewed in the *spirit* of your mind." "Ye must be born again." Equally in point are all those passages which command us to love God, to fear him, to trust in him, to glorify him: duties, which of course imply the exercise, and the vigorous exercise, of the affections of the mind. Notions however clear, morality however exemplary, are not enough till the current of feeling is turned towards God. A mere cold correctness of deportment, but which leaves the heart in a state of alienation and estrangement from God, is not the piety of the word of truth.

Now, in consequence of our natural descent from Adam since his fall, we come into the world totally destitute of this right disposition towards God, and grow up under the influence of a contrary temper. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." This is what we mean by the total depravity of human nature; not that there is an absence of all general and praise-worthy feeling towards our fellow-creatures; not that there is the predominance of criminal and vicious appetite; but that there is a total destitution of all right feeling towards God. Before

true religion be possessed by one human being, there must of consequence be an entire change of mind, a complete alteration in the disposition.

The Scriptures inform us that all are inherently depraved, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and therefore, with equal explicitness they inform us that all must be changed before they can partake of true piety. This change is so great, that our Lord himself calls it a second birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven."

Until this change takes place there cannot be even the commencement of true religion. Whatever is avoided, or whatever is done that bears the semblance of piety, is carried on without a right disposition of mind; and we cannot suppose, that God who sees the heart, is pleased with such service, any more than we should be with compliments from a person, whose bosom we knew to be destitute of all right feeling towards us. The mistake, which many make in religion is, they do not begin with the beginning; they attempt to carry up the superstructure without seeking to have the foundation laid in the renewal of their nature. They profess to serve God outwardly, before they have surrendered their *heart* to his renewing grace. Their religion is a new dress, but not a new nature. It is the mechanical performance of an automaton, not the voluntary actions of a living man. It wants that which alone constitutes piety,—a *right disposition towards God*.

III. This disposition is implanted in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The operations of Deity, in the formation of the material world, are frequently alluded to by the sacred writers, as illustrating the work of Jehovah in renewing the human mind, and bringing forth the beauties of holiness in the human character. The soul of man, as to all spiritual excellence, is in its natural state a chaos; and the same divine Spirit, which brooded on the materials of the formless void; which moved on the face of the deep, and brought order out of confusion, and beauty out of deformity; which said, Let there be light and there was light; now operates on the dark mind, the irregular affections, the hard heart of the sinner, giving true light to the understanding, a right disposition to the soul, submission to the will, and in short creating the whole man anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. This is declared in many passages of the Scriptures. "A new heart also will I give you," saith God to the Jews, "and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." "To the same effect are our Lord's words to Nicodemus. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he shall not see the kingdom of heaven." This same truth is often repeated by the apostles. "You hath he quickened," "Who hath saved us by washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "It is God who worketh in us to will and to do." That it must be some power out of man, and beyond himself to effect the change is evident, from the circumstance, that it is not merely the conduct, but the *disposition* itself, which requires to be changed; and who can reach the *mind* and regulate the springs of action but God? Not that we are to lie down in indolence, neglect, and say, "If then it is the Holy Ghost who must change the mind, I may give up all concern about the matter, and wait before I attempt to perform the duties of religion, till I feel that I am changed." No; as rational creatures we must use our faculties, consider our case, examine our hearts



tremble at our situation, call upon God in prayer, and give him no rest till he pour out his spirit upon us. The very circumstance, that we are thus dependent on God, should make us more tremblingly anxious, more importunate in prayer, for divine help. If you were entirely dependent upon the assistance of a fellow-creature for help to recover your property, liberty, or life, would not that very conviction impel you to the door and presence of the person, in all the eloquence and urgency of importunate entreaty? Would you not pour out your very soul in the language of wrestling supplication? Would you not press your suit by every argument, so long as a ray of hope fell upon your spirits?—In this case, the idea that help must come from another, would not render you indolent, and why should it do so in the business of conversion?

IV. I shall now state how a right disposition of mind towards God will exercise itself in our circumstances as sinners, which will bring us more immediately to a consideration of the nature of real religion.

First.—*Reverence, veneration, and awe*, are due from us to that great and glorious Being, who is the author of our existence, the fountain of our comforts, the witness of our actions, and the arbiter of our eternal destiny. How sublimely grand and awful is the character of God, as it is revealed in his word! Acknowledging as you do, my children, his existence, you should make him the object of your habitual fear and dread. You should maintain a constant veneration for him, a trembling deprecation of his wrath. A consciousness of his existence, and of his immediate presence, should never for any great length of time be absent from your mind.—The idea of an ever present, omniscient, omnipotent Spirit, should not only be sometimes before your understanding as an article of faith, but impressed upon your heart as an awful and practical reality. Your very spirits should ever be laboring to apprehend, and apply the representation which the Scriptures give us of the Deity. A desire to know him, to feel and act towards him with propriety, should be interwoven with the entire habit of your reflections and conduct.

Secondly.—*Penitence* is indispensably necessary.

In order to this, there must be *deep conviction of sin*; for none can mourn over a fault, which he is not convinced that he has committed. A deep consciousness of guilt is one of the first feelings of a renewed mind, and is one of the first operations of the Holy Ghost. "When he is come, he shall convince the world of sin." We come to a knowledge of our sinful state, by an acquaintance with the spirituality, purity, and extent of the moral law; "for sin is the transgression of the law." Until we know the law, which is the rule of duty, we cannot know in what way, and to what extent, we have offended against it. The exposition which our Lord has given us of the law, in his sermon on the Mount, informs us that it is not only the overt act of iniquity which makes a man a sinner: but the inward feeling, the imagination, the desire. An unchaste look is a breach of the seventh commandment; a feeling of immoderate anger is a violation of the sixth. Viewing ourselves in such a mirror, and trying ourselves by such a standard, we must all confess ourselves to be guilty of ten thousand sins. And then again we are not only sinful for what we do amiss; but for what we leave undone that is right, and ought to be done. If therefore we have a right disposition towards God, we must have a deep feeling of depravity and guilt; an impressive sense of moral obliquity; a humbling consciousness of vileness. To the charges of the law, we must cry guilty, guilty. We must not only admit upon the testimony of others that we are sinful,

but from a perception of the holiness of God's nature, and the purity of his law; we must discern the number, aggravations, and enormity of our offences. We must do homage to infinite holiness, by acknowledging ourselves altogether sinful.

*Sorrow* is essential to penitence. We cannot have been made partakers of penitence if we do not feel inward grief on the review of our transgressions. We read of "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation." If we have injured a fellow-creature, the first indication of a right sense of the aggression is a sincere regret that we should have acted so. How much more necessary is it that we should be unfeignedly sorry for our innumerable offences against God. Sorrow for sin, is not however to be estimated only by violent emotions and copious tears. The passions are much stronger in themselves, and much more excitable, in some than in others; and therefore, the same degree of inward emotion, or of outward grief, is not to be expected from all. The degrees of sorrow, as well as the outward modes of expressing it, will vary, as belonging more to the sensitive nature than to the rational; and for avoiding all scruple and doubtfulness, on this head, it may be laid down for certain, that the least degree of sorrow is sufficient, if it produce reformation; the greatest, insufficient, if it do not.

The next step in penitence is *confession*. Real sorrow for sin is always frank and impartial, while false or partial sorrow is prone to concealment, palliation, and apology. There is a wretched proneness in many persons, when convinced of sin, to offer excuses and to endeavor to think the best of their case. They cannot be brought to admit the charge in all its length and breadth; but they attempt to hide its magnitude from their own eyes. This is a dangerous disposition, and has often come between a man's soul and his salvation. All the great and precious promises of pardon are suspended upon the condition of confession, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Confession must be in detail, not in generals only; it must be free and impartial.

*Abhorrence* of sin is also included in penitence. There can be no real grief for an action, which is not accompanied by a dislike of it. We shall unquestionably hate sin, if we partake of godly sorrow. This indeed is the true meaning of the term *repentance*, which does not signify grief merely, but an entire change of mind towards sin. Abhorrence of sin is as necessary a part of repentance as grief. Our hatred of transgression must be grounded not merely on viewing it as an *injury to ourselves*, but as an *insult to God*. For penitence, on account of sin, is altogether a different feeling to that which we experience over a fire, a shipwreck, or a disease which has diminished our comforts. Our tears then are not enough, if not followed by abhorrence. If we are sincere in our grief, we shall detest and fly the viper which has stung us, and not cherish and caress the beast, whilst with false tears we bathe the wound we have received.

Thirdly.—*Faith in Jesus Christ* is no less necessary.

Faith is a very important, and most essential part of true religion. Faith in Christ is a firm practical belief of the gospel testimony concerning Christ, a full persuasion of the truth of what is declared, and a confident expectation of what is promised. The testimony is this. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Hence then, faith is believing

that Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice of atonement to divine justice, for human guilt, depending on that atonement firmly and exclusively for acceptance with God, and expecting eternal life according to God's promise.

Faith is most obviously as much a part of a right disposition towards God, as penitence. God having given Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners, and promised to save those who depend upon the atonement, and commanded all to ask for pardon and eternal life; it is manifest, that not to believe, is to dispute the divine veracity, as well as to rebel against the Divine authority. To believe the gospel, and to expect salvation through Christ, is to honor all the attributes of Deity at once, is to praise that mercy which prompted the scheme of redemption, that wisdom which devised it, that power which accomplished it, that justice which is satisfied by it, and that truth which engages to bestow its benefits on all that seek them. Not to believe is an act of contempt, which insults Jehovah in every view of his character at once. Until we are brought therefore, actually to depend on Christ so as to accept salvation, we have no real religion.

Fourthly.—A *willingness in all things to obey God*, completes the view, which ought to be given of a right disposition towards him.

There must be a distinct acknowledgment of His right to govern us, and an unreserved surrender of our heart and life to His authority: an habitual desire to do what he has enjoined, to avoid what he has forbidden. Where there is this desire to please, this reluctance to offend God, the individual will read with constancy and attention the sacred volume, which is written for the express purpose of teaching us how to obey and please the Lord. Finding there innumerable injunctions against all kinds of immorality and sin, and as many commands to practise every personal, relative, and social duty, the true Christian will be zealous for all good works. Remembering, that Jesus Christ is proposed there as our example, no less than our atonement, he will strive to be like him in purity, spirituality, submission to the will of God, and devotedness to the divine glory. Nor will he forget to imitate the beautiful meekness, lowliness, and kindness of his deportment: so that the love, which a right view of his atonement never fails to produce, transforms the soul of the believer into his image. Finding in the word of God many commands to cultivate the spirit, and attend on the exercises of devotion; the true Christian will remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, will maintain daily prayer in his closet, and unite himself in the fellowship of some Christian church, to live in communion with believers, and with them to celebrate the sacred supper.

During the trials of life, he will console himself with the promises of grace and the prospects of glory. He will soften his earthly cares by the influence of his heavenly hopes. He will endeavor to keep himself pure from the vices of the world, and shine as a spiritual light amidst surrounding darkness. His great business in this world will be to prepare for a better: and when the time arrives for him to quit the visible for the invisible state, he will bow in meek submission to the will of God, and retire from earth, cheered with the prospect and the expectation of eternal glory.

Such appears to me to be the nature of true religion. Its possessor, daily conscious of his defects, will habitually humble himself before God; and while he seeks forgiveness for past offences, through the blood of Jesus Christ, will as earnestly implore the gracious aid of the Holy Ghost to sanctify him more perfectly for the future.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE ADVANTAGES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF A PIOUS EDUCATION.

THE advantages of any system of means, must of course, as to their value, be estimated by the importance of the end to be obtained, which, in the present case, is the possession of real religion in this world, and eternal happiness in that which is to come. The end to be obtained includes not only a profession of piety in our present state of being, but all that infinite and everlasting felicity, which piety brings in its train:—of what vast consequence then must be the most suitable means for attaining this sublime purpose!

The value of a thing, my dear children, is sometimes learnt by the want of it; consider therefore, the situation of those young persons, whose parents, careless of their own souls, take no pains for the salvation of their children. In what a hapless situation are such young people placed! They are taught perhaps every thing but religion. They are instructed in all the elegant accomplishments of fashionable life; but how to serve God and obtain eternal salvation, is no part of their education. In their abode, wisdom, in the form of parental piety, is never heard saying "Hearken ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." They see cards and other amusements often introduced to the domestic circle, but no Bible: they hear singing, but it is not the songs of Zion: there is feasting and conviviality, but no devotion: there is no domestic altar, no family prayer. The Sabbath is marked with the same levity as other days. They go to church perhaps, but hear any thing rather than the pure gospel of Christ. They are taken to every gay party in the neighborhood, and are studiously trained up for pleasure. They scarcely ever see the lovely form of religion in the circles which they frequent, except, like, its divine author, it be brought there to be despised and rejected of men. How are such young people to be pitied! Who can wonder that *they do not fear the Lord!*

How different has been your lot!—the very contrast of this. From your earliest childhood you have been taught the nature and the necessity of true religion. *Instruction* on these topics has been coeval with the dawn of reason. Every topic of piety has been explained to you as you could bear it. The doctrines of Christianity have been stated and proved, its duties unfolded and enforced. The nature and attributes of God; the extent and obligation of his law; the design and grace of the gospel, have been explained—your sinful state has been clearly set before you; the object of Christ's death pointed out; the necessity of regeneration, justification, and sanctification impressed upon your heart. If you perish, will it be for lack of knowledge?—If you miss the path of life, will it be from not having it pointed out?

To instruction has been united *admonition*.—With all the tenderness of parental affection, and all the seriousness which the nature of the subject demanded, you have been warned, entreated, and even besought to fear God and seek the salvation of your souls. You have seen the tear glistening in a father's eye, while his tongue addressed to you the fondest wishes of his heart for your eternal happiness.

You have enjoyed the advantage of a system of mild and appropriate *discipline*. Remember you not the time when your budding corruptions were nipped by the kind hand of parental care; and the blossoms of youthful excellence were sheltered and fostered by a mother's watchful eye? Have they



not often reproved you for what was wrong, and commended you for what is right? Have they not by praise, and by dispraise judiciously administered, endeavored to train you up to hate that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good? Have they not kept you from improper company, and warned you against associates that were likely to injure you? Have they not with weeping eyes, and bleeding hearts, administered that correction which your sins deserved!

Have you not also seen all this enforced by the power of a *holy example*, imperfect, it is true, yet sufficient, like the sun even when partially covered with a mist, to be your guide? You have seen them walking with God, and in fellowship with Christ. You have seen them retiring for prayer, and marked with an impression of devout seriousness, they have brought from the presence of God. You cannot doubt that religion was the governing principle of their heart. The happiness, as well as holiness of true piety, has appeared in their conduct. You have seen the cloud of sorrow which affliction brought upon their brow, irradiated with the sunbeams of Christian faith and hope. Thus the whole weight of parental example, has been employed to give impression in favor of religion on your heart.

But the advantage of a pious education rests not here; for you well know that it has procured for you all other religious benefits, which conduct, in the order of means, to the salvation of the soul. You have been taken, from a child, to *hear the gospel preached* by those who are anxious to save themselves, and them that hear them. You have been associated with religious people, and joined the circles of the righteous, where the claims of religion are respected, and her holy image has been welcomed with affection, and treated with respect.—Religious books have been put into your hands.—Schools selected for your education which would aid the work of your parents, and every thing kept out of your way which would be likely to be an impediment to the formation of your religious character, and your pursuits of eternal salvation. Thus, so far as means go, the very avenues of perdition have been blocked up, the way to destruction has been filled with mounds and barriers; while the path of life has been carefully laid open to your view, and every thing done to facilitate your entrance to the road of immortality. You have been born, cradled, instructed in an element of religion; you have trod the ground, and breathed the atmosphere of piety. What advantages!! Who shall count their number or calculate their value!!

And now think of the *responsibility* which all these privileges entail upon you. This thought fills me with trembling for you, if you do not tremble for yourselves. Man is an accountable being, and his accountability to God, is in exact proportion to his opportunities for knowing and doing the will of his Creator. No talents of this kind, that are intrusted to man, are so precious as those of a religious education; and with no persons will God be so awfully strict in judgment, as with those who have possessed them. A law of *proportion*, will be the rule of the final judgment. Ten talents will not be required from those, to whom only five were delivered; nor will only five be demanded from those, with whom ten were entrusted. This is plainly stated by Christ in that most impressive passage, "That servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of

him they will ask more."\* Who upon this scale, shall measure the height and depth of your responsibility? The poor Pagan who hews down a tree, makes a god of its wood, and worships the deity which he has thus fashioned; who lives in all kind of lust, and cruelty, and falsehood—the Mohammedan, who turns his face to the rising sun, and calls upon his prophet—the rustic, who revels in the village where his father rioted before him, and where neither of them ever heard one parental admonition, nor one gospel sermon—nay, even the infidel who derides the Scripture, and was taught to do it by his sire, will not have so much to account for in the day of scrutiny, as you who have enjoyed the advantages of a pious education. Think, I beseech you, upon all your privileges, the instructions, the warnings, the admonitions, the reproofs you have received even from your infancy—your father's earnest prayers, and your mother's monitory tears—domestic teachings, and ministerial advice—Sabbaths spent, and sermons heard—all, all must be accounted for at the last day; all will be demanded in judgment. You may now think lightly of these things, but God does not. You may forget them as they pass, but God does not. They are dealt out to you as precious things: the number of them is written down amongst the records of Omniscience, and in that day when the throne shall be set, and the books shall be opened, the improvement of each will be demanded, by a voice at which the universe shall tremble. You will not be tried as one that had only the feeble glimmering of natural reason to guide his perceptions, and his conduct; but as one that walked amidst the noontide splendor of divine revelation, as one that occupied just that station in the moral world, where the light of heaven fell with the clearest and the steadiest brightness.

Do fancy yourself called into judgment to answer for your religious privileges; summoned by a voice which is impossible to resist, from the throng of trembling spirits waiting for their doom; fancy you hear the voice that commanded the universe into being, saying to you, "Child of the righteous, son of many prayers and much anxiety, give an account of thyself; exhibit the fruits and improvement of all thy rich and innumerable advantages for a life of piety. Ye parents who taught him, bear witness. I intrusted him to your care. Did ye bring him up in the fear and nurture and admonition of the Lord? Resign your trust; deliver your testimony; clear yourselves." Impressive and awful spectacle!!—There you stand before the tribunal of God, confronted by the mother that bore you, and the father that loved you. If you have neglected your advantages, and lived without piety, what a testimony will they bear. "Thou art our witness, O God, and that unhappy individual in whom we once delighted as our child, but whom we now renounce for ever, with what affectionate solicitude, and unwearyed perseverance; with how many tears and prayers we labored for his salvation. But all was useless. This is not the season of mercy, or we would still pour over his guilty head one more fervent prayer for his salvation; but forbidden to commend him to thy mercy, we can now do nothing but leave him to thy justice." Miserable man, what can he say? He is speechless. Conscious guilt leaves him without excuse, despair seals up his lips in silence. One piercing, agonizing look is directed to his parents, one deep groan escapes his bosom, as the ghosts of murdered opportunities rise upon his vision, and crowd the regions of his fancy. As his distracted eye ranges o'er the millions who stand on the left hand of the Judge, there is not one whose situation he does not envy. The Pagan, the Mo-

\* Luke xii. 47, 48.

hammedan, the poor peasant who sinned away his life in a benighted village, even the infidel, going up to receive his doom for blaspheming the God of revelation, appears less guilty, less miserable than he.

But were my pen dipped in the gall of celestial displeasure, I could not describe the weight of the sentence, nor the misery which it includes, that will fall upon the ungodly child of righteous parents.—Who shall portray the hell of such a fallen spirit, or set forth the torments with which it will be followed to the regions of eternal night? We all know that no sufferings are so dreadful as those which are self-procured; and that self-reproach infuses a bitterness into the cup of woe, which exacerbates the anguish of despair. Disappointment of long and fondly cherished hopes is dreadful; but if there be no reason for self-reproach, even this is tolerable: but to suffer, through eternal ages, in the bottomless pit, with no prospect but of misery, no employment but that of numbering over the advantages we once possessed for escaping from the wrath to come—*this* is hell.—My children! my children! my heart agonizes as I write. I groan over these lines of my book—these pictures of my fancy. Do take warning. Harken to these sentiments. Let them have their due weight upon your minds—treasure up this conviction in your minds—that of all lands on earth, it is the most dreadful to travel to the bottomless pit from a Christian country; and of all the situations in that country, it is the most awful to reach the bottomless pit from the house of godly parents. Let me be any thing in the day of judgment, and in eternal misery, rather than the irreligious child of religious parents.\*

## CHAPTER VI.

ON THE MOST PREVAILING OBSTACLES WHICH PREVENT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ENTERING ON A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

OUR Lord has most explicitly taught us, my dear children, that the entrance to the path of life is not only unattended with difficulty, nor to be accomplished without effort. Into that road we are not borne by the pressure of the thronging multitude, nor the force of natural inclination. No broad and flowery avenue attracts the eye; no syren songs of worldly pleasure allure the ear; "but strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." Hence the admonition—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." This implies that there are obstructions to be removed and difficulties to be surmounted.

The fundamental and universal obstruction with which every one has to contend, and which can be removed only by the power of the Holy Ghost, is the darkness and depravity brought upon human nature by the Fall; and the indulged sensuality, prejudice, and enmity of the carnal mind. But this prevailing depravity manifests itself in various specific forms, according to the different circumstances, constitutions, ages, and tempers of its subjects. It is an inward and universal evil, exhibiting its opposition to religion in an immense variety of ways.

1. *Self-conceit* is not uncommonly to be met with in the character of the young, and is very much opposed to the spirit of true piety.

This is a sort of epidemic disease, which finds a peculiar susceptibility in persons of your age to receive it. Young in years and experience, they are

very apt, nevertheless, to form high notions of themselves, and to fancy they are competent judges of all truth and conduct. They decide, where wiser minds deliberate; speak, where experience is silent; rush forward with impetuosity, where their sires scarcely creep; and think themselves quite as competent to determine and to act, as those who have witnessed the events of three-score years and ten. This disposition shows itself oftentimes in reference to business; and the bankrupt list has a thousand times revealed the consequences. But it is seen in more important matters than business. In the gayety of their spirits, and in the effluence of youthful energy, *they* see no great need of religion to make them happy; or if *some* religion be necessary, they do not think it requires all that solicitude and caution with which older Christians attend to its concerns: *they* are not so much in danger as some would represent; *they* shall not take up with the humbling, self-abasing, penitential religion of their fathers, but adopt a more rational piety; *they* have reason to guide them, strength to do all that is necessary, and therefore cannot see the need of so much fear, caution, and dependance.

My children, be humble: pride and self-conceit will otherwise be your ruin. Think of your age and your inexperience. How often, already, have you been misled by the ardor of youth, in cases where you were most confident that you were right? When the Athenian orator was asked, What is the first grace in oratory? he replied, Pronunciation; the second? Pronunciation; the third? still he replied, Pronunciation: so, if I am asked, What is the first grace in religion? I reply, Humility; the second? Humility; the third? still Humility: and self-conceit is the first, and the second, and the third obstruction.

2. *Love of worldly pleasure* is a great impediment to piety. It has been most profanely said, "Youth is the time for pleasure, manhood for business, old age for religion." It is painful to observe, that if the two latter allotments of human life are neglected, the first is not. Young people too often answer the description given by the apostle, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." In youth, there are many temptations to the gratification of this propensity; the senses are vigorous, the spirits lively, the imagination ardent, the passions warm, and the anxieties of life but few and feeble. Hence many give themselves up to the impulses of their corrupt nature, and are held in alienation from a life of piety by a love of pleasure. Some are carried away by a vain and frivolous love of dress and show; others by a delight in conviviality and parties; others by routs, balls, and theatrical representations; others by the sports of the field; others by intemperance and debauchery.

It is admitted that all these gratifications are not equally degrading in themselves, nor equally destructive of reputation and health; but if indulged as the chief good, they may all prevent the mind from attending to the concerns of religion. A predominant love of worldly pleasure, of any kind, is destructive in every point of view. It unfits you for the pursuits, and disinclines you for the toils of business; and thus is the enemy of your worldly interests. It often leads on from gratifications, which, in the opinion of the world, are decent and moral, to those which are vicious and immoral; it is incompatible with the duties and comforts of domestic life; it prevents the improvement of the understanding, and keeps the mind barren and empty; it prevents us from becoming the benefactors of our species; but its greatest mischief is, that it totally indisposes the mind for religion, and thus extends its mischief to eternity: in short, if cherished and persisted in, it ruins and damns the soul for ever.

\* There is a little repetition in this chapter, of some of the sentiments in the first; but as the subject led to it, the author was not anxious to avoid it.



My children, beware of this most dangerous propensity; consider whither it leads; check it to the uttermost; and ask grace from heaven to acquire a better taste. "What a hideous case is this, to be so debased in the temper of your minds as to lose all the laudable appetites and advantages of an intellectual nature; and to be sunk into the deformity of a devil, and into the meanness of a brute! To be so drenched in malignant delights, and in sensual, fading, and surfeiting pleasures, as to forego all real and eternal satisfactions for them, and to entail insupportable and endless miseries upon yourselves by them." Yes, if you live for worldly pleasure, and neglect religion, you are giving up an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, for light and frivolous gratifications, which are but for a moment. You are, for the sake of a few years' empty mirth, entailing everlasting ages of unmitigated torments.

Besides, though worldly pleasure gratifies, does it satisfy? When the honey is all sucked, does it leave no sting behind? And then, what are the pleasures of the world compared with those of religion, but the shadow to the substance; the stagnant pool to the fresh and running fountain; the smoking taper to the mid-day sun? Shall worldly pleasure cheat you of salvation?

3. *Prejudice against the ways of Religion*, as gloomy, keeps many from yielding to its claims.

Many young people seem to compare religion to a dark subterranean cavern, to which, as you descend, you quit all that is joyous in life; which is impervious to the light of heaven, and inaccessible to the melodies of creation; where nothing meets the eye but tears, nor the ear but sighs; where the inhabitants, arrayed in sackcloth, converse only in groans; where, in short, a smile is an offence against the superstition that reigns there, and a note of delight would be avenged by the awful genius of the place, with an expulsion of the individual who had dared to be cheerful. *This religion?* No, my children. I will give you another figurative view of it. "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table; she hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled."\*

This is a metaphorical description of religion under the name of wisdom, and the figure of a feast. It is declared in revelation, and all the saints in the universe will confirm the truth of the assertion, that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."†

4. *An inconsiderate heedless temper* is with many an obstruction to piety.

There is frequently, in persons of your age and circumstances, a peculiar thoughtlessness of mind: a want of calm consideration and steady reflection. They do not deliberate and ponder. Their minds seem as light as thistle-down, and as volatile as the butterfly. They are always walking, talking, smiling, but rarely thinking. The meditative mood, the contemplative attitude, is never theirs. If you want them, never look for them at home, but watch for them abroad. Their extreme volatility prevents them from giving due heed even to the concerns of the world; and as for *religion*, though they are immortal creatures, lost sinners invited to salvation, destined to eternity, and hastening to heaven or hell, they have scarcely ever had a serious thought upon the subject. Even *these* momentous topics are treated with the utmost lightness of mind. If the

eye of any one of this class should range over these pages, let me beseech her to look at her picture, and ask herself if she can admire it. O my young friend, cannot the high themes of eternity make you serious? Placed as you are, on this earth, between the torments of the damned and the felicities of the redeemed; with the preparations for judgment going on, and the scenes of eternity opening before you; will you laugh out your little share of existence, and flutter through life, till, like a bird dropping into a volcano, you fall into the bottomless pit! Let these things soberise your thoughts, and bring you to the subject of religion, with something like an appropriate seriousness of mind.

5. *Evil companions* have often proved an obstruction to young people in the ways of piety.

Young people are generally inclined for company, and too often it proves a snare to them. Many a hopeful youth, that seemed at one time setting out in the ways of piety, has been arrested in his holy career, by some unsuitable associate, with whom he has joined himself in the bonds of friendship; and thus he who seemed beginning in the spirit has ended in the flesh, leaving his pious friends to exclaim in the tone of grief and disappointment, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" How difficult is it, when a young person is first brought under the influence of genuine piety, to break from his former gay companions; and yet, if he would persevere in his new course, it *must* be done. In such cases the bonds of association *must* be broken. You must give up your society or your salvation; and can you hesitate?

6. *The misconduct of professing Christians, especially of parents*, proves to many young persons, a stone of stumbling, at the entrance of the path of godliness.

They have seen the open immorality, or the secret hypocrisy of those, who profess to be partakers of true piety, and under the influence of disgust and disappointment, are ready to conclude that all are alike, and that there is no reality in religion, no truth in revelation. I know that these things must often prove an obstruction in their way, and have produced in some instances an unconquerable antipathy to the ways of godliness. Yet is it rational to have our minds thus prejudiced against Christianity, by the apostacies of those who were only its *pretended* disciples? But can that system be divine, you exclaim, amongst whose followers there are so many hypocrites?—Can that system, I reply, be otherwise than divine, which has outlived them all, and triumphs alike over the apostacies of its seeming friends, and the opposition of its real foes? Considering the numberless instances of this kind which have occurred, even from the beginning, I am persuaded that had not Christianity been supported by Omnipotence, nothing more than its name as an ancient delusion, would have reached the nineteenth century. Nothing but that which was sustained by a principle of divine life, could have outlived so much internal decay, and so much external violence. Besides, does not the perpetual effort to counterfeit, prove its real excellence? For who imitates that which is worthless? Look at the bright, as well as at the dark side. Against the troops of deserters and renegades, muster the thronging millions, who have endured temptation, and continued faithful unto death; call up the noble army of martyrs, whom neither dungeons nor fetters, scaffolds nor stakes, could intimidate; who held fast their principles amidst unheard of tortures, and suffered not the king of terrors to rescue from their grasp the doctrines of their faith.

Judge of religion, as it demands to be tried, by its own evidences, and not by the conduct of its professors. Look at it in its own light, and there you

\* Proverbs ix. 1, 5.

† See this proved at large in the chapter on the Pleasures of Religion.

will derive a conviction of its truth and importance, which would make you cling to it in a crisis, when even all men should forsake it. Religion an imposture, because some of its professors are false!! As rationally may you conclude that there is no real orb of day, because by an optical illusion, mock suns are sometimes seen in the atmosphere.

Remember, your neglect of religion will not be excused, on the ground that your prejudices were shocked by the misconduct of professing Christians. Your obligations are in no degree dependant on the manner in which others discharge theirs.

7. *A spirit of procrastination*, has considerable influence, in preventing the young from attending to the claims of religion.

This has been the ruin of multitudes now in hell. How many amongst the lost souls in prison are now rueing the cheat, which was practised upon their judgment, when they were persuaded to put off the affairs of eternity till another time. Perhaps there is not one in perdition, but intended to be religious at some future period. It is recorded of Archius, a Grecian magistrate, that a conspiracy was formed against his life. A friend who knew the plot, dispatched a courier with the intelligence, who, on being admitted to the presence of the magistrate, delivered to him a packet with his message:—"My Lord, the person who writes you this letter, conjures you to read it immediately,—it contains serious matters." Archius, who was then at a feast, replied, smiling, "Serious affairs to-morrow," put the packet aside, and continued the revel. On that night the plot was executed, the magistrate slain, and Archius, on the morrow when he intended to read the letters, a mutilated corpse, leaving to the world a fearful example of the effects of procrastination. My children, do not, when God and the preacher say *to-day* give your attention to religion, reply, "*to-morrow*;" for alas! on that morrow you may be in—eternity.

Young people are very apt to presume on long life: but on what ground? Have they an assurance? No, not for an hour. Is it a rare thing for young people to die? Go into any church-yard in the kingdom, and learn the contrary from the records of the tombs. Have you any security in the vigor of your constitution from the melancholy change produced by decay and death? "So have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was as fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness, and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head, and broke its stalk, and at night having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and worn-out faces."\*

But besides, admitting that you should live, is not your inclination likely, if possible, to be less and less towards religion? Your acts of sin will be confirmed into habits. Your heart will become harder and harder, for it is the nature of depravity to increase. If you wished to extinguish a fire, would you wait till it was a conflagration? if to cure a cold, would you wait till it was a fever?

What if God should withdraw his spirit, and give you up to total insensibility? For consider his grace is necessary to salvation. Religion is the work of God in the soul of man. Desponded and rejected to-day, is he not likely to abandon you to-morrow? and then what a situation are you in?—Like a barren rock, insensible both to the beams of the sun and the showers of heaven! You may fecitate yourselves in these circumstances on the pro-

traction of life, but it is your curse and not your blessing. You would tremble with indescribable horror at the thought of going the next hour to the flame which is never to be quenched; you would account it the climax of ruin. No, it is not. I can tell you something worse than even this,—What; worse than going immediately to the bottomless pit? Yes. To live longer abandoned by God! given up to the deceitfulness of sin, and hardness of heart; left to fill up still more to the brim the measure of iniquity; this, is worse than instant damnation. Horrible as it seems, yet it is true, that many now in torment wish they had been there before; and that they had not been permitted to live and commit those sins, which are the sources of their bitterest sufferings.

These are amongst the most prevailing obstacles which often prevent young people from entering on a life of piety. Happy are they who by the grace of God are enabled to surmount them, and press through these impediments into the kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ON THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.

THE detection of deceit, if not a pleasant employment, is certainly a profitable one: and that man deserves well of society, who puts them upon their guard against a dangerous impostor. The object of this section of my book is to expose the greatest deceiver in the world; whose design is to cheat you, my dear children, not of your property, nor of your liberty, nor of your life; but of what is infinitely dearer than all these—the *salvation of your immortal soul*. His success has been frightful beyond description. Earth is full of his operations—hell of his spoils. Millions of lost souls bewail his success in the bottomless pit, as the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Who is this impostor, and what is his name? Is it the false prophet of Mecca? No. The spirit of Paganism? No. The genius of Infidelity? No. It is the human heart.—It is to this, that the prophet's description belongs, "Deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." You will perceive, that, to the wiles of this deceiver, *you* are exposed. Let me then request your very serious attention, whilst I lay open to you his deep devices, and endless machinations.

By the deceitfulness of the heart, we are to understand the liability of our judgment to be perverted, and misled by the depravity of our nature. And the following are the proofs of the fact.

1. *The astonishing ignorance in which many persons remain of their character and motives.*

It is with the mind, as with the countenance every one seems to know it better than its possessor.—Now is not this somewhat singular? With the power of introspection, with access to our spirits every moment, is it not remarkable that any one should remain in ignorance of himself? Yet is it not the case with myriads? How often do we hear persons condemning others for those very faults, of which every one perceives that they themselves are guilty. We have a striking instance of this in David, when the prophet related to him the parable of the little ewe lamb. It is astonishing with what dexterity some persons will ward off the arrows of conviction which are aimed at *their hearts*, and give them a direction towards others. When in preaching or in conversation, a speaker is endeavoring in a covert way to make them feel, that *they* are intended as the object of his censure, they are most busily employed in fastening it upon others, and admire the skill, and applaud the severity, with

\* Jeremy Taylor's Holy Dying, p. 8.



which it is administered. And when at length it becomes necessary to throw off the disguise, and to declare to them, "Thou art the man," it is quite amusing to see what surprise and incredulity they will manifest, and how they will either smile at the ignorance, or frown on the malice, which could impute to them faults, of which, however guilty they might be in other respects, they are totally innocent.

This self-deception prevails to a most alarming extent, in the business of personal religion. The road to destruction is crowded with travellers, who vainly suppose that they are walking in the path of life, and whose dreams of happiness nothing will disturb, but the dreadful reality of eternal misery. How can this mistake arise? The Scripture most explicitly states the difference between a good man and a wicked one: the line of distinction between conversion and impenitence is broad, and deep, and plain. It can only be accounted for on the ground of the deceitfulness of the heart.

Then, when conviction forces itself upon the mind, and the real character begins to appear, what a degree of evidence will be resisted, and on what mere shadows of proof will men draw a conclusion in their own favor. How they mistake motives which are apparent to every by-stander; and, in some instances, even commend themselves for virtues, when the corresponding vices are ripe in their bosoms.

2. Another proof of the deceitfulness of the heart, lies in the *disguises which it throws over its vices*.

It calls evil good, and good evil. How common is it for men to change the names of their faults, and endeavor to reconcile themselves to sins, which, under their own proper designations, must be regarded as subjects of condemnation. Thus, intemperance and excess are called social disposition and good fellowship; pride is dignity of mind; revenge is spirit; vain pomp, luxury, and extravagance, are taste, elegance, and refinement; covetousness is prudence; levity, folly, obscenity, are innocent liberty, cheerfulness, and humor. But will a new name, alter the nature of a vice? No: you may clothe a swine in purple and gold, and dress a demon in the robes of an angel of light; and the one is a beast, and the other a devil still.

The same operation of deceit which would *strip vice of its deformity*, would *rob holiness of its beauty*. Tenderness of conscience is called ridiculous precision; zeal against sin is moroseness and ill-nature; seriousness of mind, repulsive melancholy; superior sanctity, disgusting hypocrisy; in short, all spiritual religion is nauseating cant, whining methodism, wild enthusiasm. It is however the climax of this deceitfulness, when vice is committed under the notion that it is a virtue; and this has been done in innumerable instances. Saul of Tarsus thought he was doing God service, while he was destroying the church. The bigots of Rome have persuaded themselves they were doing right, while they were shedding the blood of the saints. O the depth of deceit in the human heart!

3. What a proneness is there in most persons to *frame excuses for their sins*, and by what shallow pretexts are they often led to commit iniquity.

Ever since that fatal moment, when our first parents endeavored to shift the blame of their crime from each other upon the serpent, a disposition to *apologize* for sin, rather than to confess it, has been the hereditary disease of their offspring. It discovers itself early in the human character: and it is truly affecting to see how much adroitness is manifested by very young children in excusing their faults; and this disposition grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength. Some excuse their sins on the ground of custom: others plead

the smallness of the sins; others endeavor to persuade themselves that the suddenness and strength of temptation, will be admitted as a justification of their conduct; while some plead the power of example: it is the first offence, say some; it is the force of habit, exclaim others: some attempt to find excuse for their actual sins in the inherent depravity of their nature; others in the peculiarity of their temper and constitution; a few go so far as to lay all their sins upon the Author of their nature.—These are but some amongst the many excuses, by which men are first led on to sin; by which they afterwards defend themselves against the accusations of conscience; and which most convincingly demonstrate the deep deceitfulness of the human heart.

4. It is proved also by the *gradual and almost insensible manner in which it leads men on to the commission of sin*.

No man becomes wicked all at once. The way of a sinner in his career has been compared to the course of a stone down a steep hill, the velocity of which is accelerated by every revolution. The heart does not offend, and shock the judgment, by asking for too much at first; it conceals the end of the career, and lets only so much be seen as is required for the immediate occasion. When the prophet of the Lord disclosed to Hazeel his future enormities, he exclaimed, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?" The exclamation was perfectly honest. At that time, no doubt he was incapable of such wickedness, and it was a sincere revulsion of nature which prompted the expression of his abhorrence. But he knew not his heart.—Little by little he was led forward in the course of iniquity, and at length exceeded, by his wickedness, the prophet's prediction. Habit renders all things easy, not excepting the most atrocious crimes.—Men have often done that without reluctance or remorse, which at one period of their lives, they would have shuddered to contemplate. Many have committed forgery, who, at one time, could have been persuaded by no arguments, nor induced by any motives, to wrong an individual of a farthing; and the murderer, whose hands are stained with blood, would probably, a few years or months before, have trembled at the idea of destroying an animal. "When the heart of man is bound by the grace of God, and tied in the golden bands of religion, and watched by angels, and tended by ministers, those nurse-keepers of the soul, it is not easy for a man to wander and the evil of his heart be like the fierceness of lions' whelps; but when he has once broken the hedge, and got into the strength of youth, and the licentiousness of ungoverned age, it is wonderful to observe what a great inundation of mischief in a very short time, will overflow all the banks of reason and religion. Vice is first pleasing—then it grows easy—then it is delightful—then it is frequent—then habitual—then confirmed—then the man is independent—then he is obstinate—then he resolves never to repent—then he dies—then he is damned.\*"

When a young man that has received a pious education, begins to be solicited to break through the restraints imposed upon him by conscience, he can venture only on *lesser sins*: he perhaps only takes a walk on the Sabbath with a friend, or goes to see a play, or joins in one midnight revel: but even this is not done with ease; he hears the voice of an internal monitor, starts and hesitates, but complies. A little remorse follows, but it is soon worn off. The next time the temptation presents itself, his reluctance is diminished, and he *repeats the offence* with less previous hesitation, and less subsequent compunction. What he did once, he

now without scruple does frequently. His courage is so far increased, and his fear of sin is so far abated, that he is soon emboldened to commit a *greater sin*, and the tavern, and the horse-race are frequented with as little reluctance as the theatre. Conscience now and then remonstrates, but he has acquired the ability to *disregard its warnings*, if not to silence them. In process of time the society of all who make the least pretensions to piety is avoided as troublesome and distressing, and the heedless youth joins himself with companions better suited to his taste. Now his sins grow with vigor under the fostering influence of *evil company*, just as trees which are set in a plantation. By this time the Bible is put out of sight, all prayer neglected, and the Sabbath constantly profaned. At length he feels the *force of custom*, and becomes enslaved by inveterate habit. The admonitions of a father, and the tears of a pious mother, produce no impressions, but such as are like the "morning cloud, or early dew, which soon passeth away." He returns to the society of his evil associates, where parental admonitions are converted into matter of wicked sport. The sinner is *settled now in an evil way*; and the sapling of iniquity has struck the roots deep into the soul of depravity. The voice of conscience is now but rarely heard, and even then, only in the feeble whisper of a dying friend. His next stage is *to lose the sense of shame*. He no longer wears a mask, or seeks the shade, but sins openly and without disguise. *Conscience now is quiet*; and without spectre to warn, or angel to deliver, he pursues without a check the career of sin. He can meet a saint without a blush, and hear the voice of warning with a sneer. Would you believe it? he *glories in his shame*, and attempts to justify his conduct. Not content with being wicked, *he attempts to make others as bad as himself*, puts on the character of an apostle of Satan, and, like his master, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. As he is condemned in all his ways by the Bible, he endeavors to get rid of this troublesome judge, and persuades himself that religion is a cheat. With *infidel principles*, and immoral practices, he now hurries to destruction, polluted and polluting. His parents, whose gray hairs he brought in sorrow to the grave, have entered on their rest, and in mercy are not permitted to live to witness his shame. His vices lead him to extravagance; his extravagance is beyond his resources, and in an evil hour, under the pressure of claims which he is unable to meet, he commits an act which forfeits his life. He is arrested, tried, convicted, condemned, executed.

This is no fancy picture; it has often occurred. My dear children, see the deceitfulness of sin.—Meditate, and tremble, and pray. Be alarmed at little sins, for they lead on to great ones; at acts of sin, for they tend to habits; at common ones, for they issue in those that are uncommon. I have read of a servant who went into a closet, with an intention only to gratify his palate with some sweetmeats, but perceiving some silver articles, he relinquished the meaner prey for these, purloined them, became a confirmed thief, and died at the gallows. Many a prostitute, who has perished in a garret upon straw, commenced her miserable and loathsome course with mere love of dress. Sin is like a fire, which should be extinguished in the first spark, for if it be left to itself, it will soon rage like a conflagration.

5. The last proof of the deceitfulness of the heart, which I shall advance is, the *delusive prospects which it presents to the judgment*.

Sometimes it pleads for the commission of sin on the ground of the *pleasure which it affords*. But while it speaks of the honey of gratification, does

it also tell of the venom of reflection and punishment?

At other times it suggests that *retreat is easy in the career of sin*, and may be resorted to if its progress be inconvenient. Is it so? The very contrary is true. Every step we advance renders it more and more difficult to return.

Then it urges us forward with the delusive idea that *it is time enough to repent in old age*. But does it say, what indeed is true, that for ought you know, you may die to-morrow? No; and herein is its deceit.

*It dwells upon the mercy of God*; but is silent upon the subject of his justice.

What think you now of the human heart? Can you question its deceitfulness, or that it is deceitful above all things? How then will you treat it?

*Think meanly of it*. Surely, with such a picture before you, you will not talk of the moral dignity of human nature; because this would be to talk of the dignity of falsehood and imposition.

*Seek to have it renewed by the Holy Ghost*. It is a first principle of religion, that the heart must be renewed, and here you see the need of it. It is not only the conduct which is bad, but the *heart*, and therefore it is not only necessary for the conduct to be reformed, but the *very nature* must be regenerated. It is the heart which imposes upon the judgment, and the judgment which misleads the conduct; and, therefore, the root of the evil is not touched until the disposition is changed.

*Suspect the heart, and search it*. Treat it as you would a man who had deceived you in every possible way, and in innumerable instances had been proved to be false. Continually suspect it. Always act under the supposition, that it is concealing something that is wrong. Perpetually examine it. Enter the house within you; break open every door; go into every apartment; search every corner; sweep every room. Take with you the lamp of revelation, and throw a light on every hiding place.

*Watch the heart with all diligence*, knowing that out of it are the issues of life. You would observe every attitude, every movement, every look of an impostor who had fixed his eye upon your person and property. Thus treat your hearts. Let every thought, every imagination, every desire, be placed under the most vigilant and ceaseless inspection.

*Place it in the hand of God to keep it*. "My son, give me thine heart," is his own demand. Give it to him, that it might be filled with his love, and kept by his power. Let it be your daily prayer, "Lord, hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; keep me by thy power through faith unto salvation."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON TRANSIENT DEVOTIONS.

THE Church, (said Saurin,) had seldom seen happier days, than those described in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. God had never diffused his benedictions on a people in richer abundance. Never had a people gratitude more lively, piety more fervent. The Red Sea had been passed; Pharaoh and his insolent court were buried in the waves; access to the land of promise was opened: Moses had been admitted to the holy mountain to derive felicity from God the source, and sent to distribute it amongst his countrymen: to these choice favors, promises of new and greater blessings yet were added; and God said, "Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant,



then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, although all the earth be mine." The people were deeply affected with this collection of miracles. Each individual entered into the same views, and seemed animated with the same passion; all hearts were united, and one voice expressed the sense of all the tribes of Israel;—"all that the Lord hath spoken we will do." But this devotion had one great defect—it lasted only forty days. In forty days, the deliverance out of Egypt, the catastrophe of Pharaoh, the passage of the Red Sea, the articles of the covenant; in forty days, promises, vows, oaths, all were effaced from the heart, and forgotten. Moses was absent, the lightning did not glitter, the thunder-claps did not roar, and "the Jews made a calf in Horeb, worshipped that molten image, and changed their glorious God into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass."

Here, my children, was a most melancholy instance of transient devotion. Alas! that such instances should be so common. Alas! that Jehovah should so frequently have to repeat the ancient reproach, and his ministers have to echo, in sorrowful accents, the painful complaint, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee! O Judah, what shall I do unto thee! For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away." Nothing, however, is more common than such fugitive impressions. Disappointment of the bitterest kind, is very frequently experienced, both by parents and ministers, in consequence of the sudden turning aside of those young persons, who for a while seemed to run the race that is set before us in the word of God. At one time they appeared to be inflamed with a holy ambition to win the prize of glory, honor, and immortality; we saw them start with eagerness, and run with speed; but after a while we met them returning to the barrier, leaving us in the bitterness of our spirits to exclaim, "Ye did run well, what did hinder you?"

The religion I am now describing is not the hypocrisy of the pretending Christian, nor is it the backsliding of the real one; it goes further than the first, but does not go so far as the last. It is sincere of its kind, and in that it goes further than hypocrisy: but it is unfruitful, and in that it is inferior to the piety of the weak and revolving Christian. It is sufficient to discover sin, but not to correct it; sufficient to produce good resolutions, but not to keep them; it softens the heart, but does not renew it; it excites grief, but it does not eradicate evil dispositions. It is a piety of times, opportunities, and circumstances, diversified a thousand ways, the effect of innumerable causes, but it expires as soon as the causes are removed.

*Inconstans* was a youth who had enjoyed a pious education; he discovered many amiable qualities, and was often impressed by the religious admonitions he received; but his impressions soon wore off, and he became as careless about his eternal concerns as before. He left the parental roof, and was apprenticed; and his parents having taken care to place him in a pious family, and under the faithful preaching of the word, he still enjoyed all the external means of grace, and still, at times, continued to feel their influence. His attention was oftentimes fixed when hearing the word, and he was sometimes observed to weep. On one occasion in particular, when a funeral sermon had been preached for a young person, a more than ordinary effect was produced upon his mind. He returned from the house of God pensive and dejected, retired to his closet, and with much earnestness prayed to God, resolved to attend more to the claims of religion, and to become a real Christian. The next morning he read the Bible, and prayed, before he left his chamber. This practice he continued day after

day. A visible change was produced in his deportment. His seriousness attracted the attention and excited the hopes of his friends. But, by degrees, he relapsed into his former state, gave up reading the Scriptures, then prayer; then he reunited himself with some companions from whom for a season he had withdrawn himself, till at length he was as unconcerned about salvation as ever. Some time after this, *Inconstans* was seized with a fever. The disease resisted the power of medicine, and baffled the skill of the physician; he grew worse and worse. His alarm became excessive. He sent for his minister and his parents, confessed and bewailed his fickleness. What tears he shed! What sighs he uttered! What vows he made! "Oh! if God would but spare me this once; if he would but grant me one more trial; if he would but indulge me with one more opportunity of salvation, how would I improve it to his glory and my soul's eternal interest." His prayers were answered: he recovered. What became of his vows, resolutions, and promises? The degree of his piety was regulated by the degree of his malady. Devotion rose and fell with his pulse. His zeal kept pace with his fever; as one decreased, the other died away, and the recovery of his health was the resurrection of his sins. *Inconstans* is at this moment what he always was, a melancholy specimen of the nature of mere transient religion.

What is wanting in this religion? You will of course reply, "continuance." This is true. But why did it not continue? I answer, *there was no real change of the heart*. The passions were moved, the feelings were excited, but the disposition remained unaltered. In the affairs of this life, men are often led by the operation of strong causes, to act in opposition to their real character. The cruel tyrant, by some sudden and most affecting appeal to his clemency, may have the spark of pity smitten from his flinty heart: but the flint remaining, the wretch returns again to his practices of blood. The covetous man might, by a vivid description of want and misery, be for a season melted to liberality; but like the surface thawed for an hour by the sun, and frozen again immediately after the source of heat has retired, his benevolence is immediately chilled by the prevailing frost of his nature. In these cases, as in that of religion, there is a suspension of the natural disposition, not a renewal of it. All religion must be transient, by whatever cause it is produced, and with whatever ardor it should for a season be practised, that does not spring from a regenerated mind. It may, like the grass upon the house-top, or the grain that is scattered in unprepared soil, spring up and flourish for a season, but for want of root it will speedily wither away. Do not then, my dear children, be satisfied with a mere excitement of the feelings, however strong it might happen to prove; but seek to have the general bias of the mind renewed.

You cannot suppose, if you consider only for a moment, that these fugitive impressions will answer the ends of religion, either in this world or in that which is to come. They will not honor God; they will not sanctify the heart; they will not comfort the mind; they will not save the soul; they will not raise you to heaven; they will not save you from hell. Instead of preparing you at some future time to receive the gospel, such a state of mind, if persisted in, has a most direct and dangerous tendency to harden the heart. What God in his sovereign grace may be pleased to effect, is not for me to say; but as to natural influence, nothing can be more clear than that this flinty piety is gradually putting the soul farther and farther from true religion. Iron, by being frequently heated, is hardened into steel; water that has been boiled becomes the colder

for its previous warmth; soil that has been moistened with the showers of heaven, becomes, when hardened by the sun, less susceptible of impression than before; and that heart which is frequently impressed by religion, without being renewed by it, becomes more and more insensible to its sacred influence. They who have trembled at the terrors of the Lord without being subdued by them, who have outlived their fears without being sanctified by them, will soon come to that degree of insensibility, which will enable them to hear, without being appalled, the most awful denunciations of divine wrath. They who have been melted from time to time by the exhibitions of divine love, but have not been converted by it, will come at length to hear of it with the coldest indifference. It is a dreadful state of mind to be given up to a spirit of slumber, and a callous heart; and nothing is more likely to accelerate the process, than occasional yet ineffectual religious impressions. Can we conceive of any thing more likely to induce Jehovah to give us up to judicial blindness and insensibility, than this tampering with conviction, this trifling with devotional impression? These pious emotions which are occasionally excited, are kind and gentle admonitions that He has come near to the soul, with all the energies of his Spirit: they are the work of mercy knocking at the door of our hearts, and saying, "Open to me, that I may enter with salvation in my train." If they are from time to time neglected, what can be looked for but that the celestial visitor should withdraw, and pronounce, as he retires, the fearful sentence, "Wo unto you when my Spirit departeth from you."

There is something inexpressibly wicked in remaining in this state of mind. Such persons are in some respects more sinful than they whose minds have never been in any degree enlightened: whose fears have never been in any degree excited; who have paid no attention whatever to religion, but whose minds are sealed up in ignorance and insensibility. When persons who have taken some steps in religion return again; when they who have come near the kingdom of God, recede from it; and they who have sipped, as it were, of the cup of salvation, withdraw their lips from the water of life, the interpretation of their conduct is this, "We have tried the influence of religion, and do not find it so worthy of our cordial reception as we expected; we have seen something of its glory, and are disappointed; we have tasted something of its sweetness, and, upon the whole, we prefer to remain without it." Thus they are like the spies who brought a false report of the land of promise, and discouraged the people. They defame the character of true piety, and prejudice men's minds against it. They libel the Bible, and persuade others to have nothing to do with religion. My children, can you endure the thought of this?

Transient devotions have a great tendency to strengthen the principle of unbelief in our nature.—It is not only very possible, but very common for men to sin themselves into a state of despair of God's mercy; and none are so likely to do this, as those who have repeatedly gone back to the world after a season of religious impression. In our intercourse with society, if we have greatly offended and insulted a man after professions of decided friendship and warm attachment, we can hardly persuade ourselves to approach him again, or be persuaded to think he will admit us again to the number of his friends. And, as we are prone to argue from ourselves to God, if we have frequently repented, and as frequently returned again to sin, we shall be in great danger of coming to the conclusion that we have sinned past forgiveness, and abandon ourselves to guilt and despair. I have read of a gentleman who lived without any regard to religion till he was

taken alarmingly ill, when his conscience was roused from its slumber and he saw the wickedness of his conduct. A minister was sent for, to whom he acknowledged his guilt and begged an interest in his prayers, at the same time vowing that if God would spare his life, he would alter the course of his behavior. He was restored to health and for a while was as good as his word. He set up family worship, maintained private prayer, and frequented the house of God; in short, appeared to be a new man in Christ Jesus. At length he began to relax, and step by step went back to his former state of careless indifference. The hand of affliction again arrested him. His conscience again ascended her tribunal, and in terrible accents arraigned and condemned him. The state of his mind was horrible. The arrows of the Lord pierced him through, the poison whereof drank up his spirits. His friends entreated him to send for the minister as before.—"No," he exclaimed, "I who have trifled with the mercy of God once, cannot expect it now." No persuasions could shake this resolution; no representation of divine grace could remove his despair; and without asking for pardon, he died.

The same despair has, in many other instances, resulted from the same sin of trifling with religious impressions.

These pages will probably be read by some, whose minds are under religious concern. Your situation is more critical and important than any language which I could employ, would enable me to represent. If your present anxiety subsides into your former carelessness, you are in the most imminent danger of being left to the depravity of your nature. God is now approaching you in the exercise of his love, and waiting that he may be gracious. Seek him while he is to be found, call upon him while he is near. The soft breezes of celestial influence are passing over you; seize the auspicious season, and hoist every sail to catch the breath of heaven. Tremble at the thought of losing your present feelings. Be much and earnest in prayer to God, that he would not suffer you to relapse into unconcern and neglect. Take every possible means to preserve and deepen your present convictions. Read the Scriptures with renewed diligence. Go with increased earnestness, and interest, and prayer, to the house of God. Endeavor to gain clearer views of the truth as it is in Jesus, and labor to have your mind instructed as well as your heart impressed. Be satisfied with nothing short of a renewed mind, the new birth. Be upon your guard against self-dependence. Watch against this, as much as against grosser sins. Consider yourself as a little child, who can do nothing without God. Study your own sinfulness in the glass or God's holy law. Grow in humility: it is not well for a plant to shoot upwards quickly, before it has taken deep root; if there be no fibres in the earth, and no moisture at the root, whatever blossoms or fruit there be in the branches, they will soon fall off; and in the same way, if your religion do not strike root in humility, and be not moistened with the tears of penitential grief, whatever blossoms of joy or fruits of zeal there may be on the mind or conduct, they will soon drop off under the next gust or heat of temptation. Take heed of secret sinning. A single lust unmortified will be like a worm at the root of the newly-planted piety of your soul. Continually remember that it is yet but the beginning of religion with you. Do not rest here; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: nothing short of this will save you: without faith, all you have felt, or can feel, will do you no good: you must come to Christ, and be anxious to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God our Saviour.

Some, it is probable, will read these lines, who



have had religious impressions, and lost them.—Your goodness has vanished like the cloud of the morning; and like the early dew has sparkled and exhaled. Sometimes you exclaim, with an emphasis of deep melancholy,

"What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!  
How sweet their memory still!  
But they have left an aching void  
The world can never fill."

You are not, you cannot be happy, Oh no: the din of pleasure or of business cannot drown the voice of conscience: a pause now and then occurs, when its thunders are heard, and heard with indelible alarm. Sometimes, in the midst of your pleasures, when all around is jollity and mirth, you see a spectacle which others do not see, and are terrified by a mystic hand which writes your doom upon the wall. From that moment there is no more joy for you.—Sometimes you almost curse the hour when the voice of a faithful preacher, lodged conviction in your bosom, and half spoiled you for a man of pleasure and the world. You look with almost envy on those who, by never having been taught to fear God, are wrapt in total darkness, and see not the dim spectres, the half discovered shapes of mischief, which, in the twilight of your soul, present themselves to your affrighted vision. At other times, a little relenting, you exclaim, "O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my tabernacle. What would I give to recall the views and feelings of those days. Happy seasons! Ye are fled like visions of spiritual beauty. And are ye fled for ever? Can no power recall you to this troubled mind?" Yes, my young friend, they are all within reach, lingering to return. Fly to God in prayer, beseech him to have mercy upon you. Implore him to rouse you from the slumber into which you have fallen. Beware of the chilling influence of despondency. There is no room for despair. Covet the possession of true religion. Examine for the cause which destroyed your impressions in the time that is past. Was it some improper companion? Abandon him for ever, as you would a viper. Was it some situation unfriendly to godliness, which you voluntarily choose, as Lot did Sodom, on account of its worldly advantages? Relinquish it without delay. Escape for thy life, and tarry not in all the plain. Was it some besetting sin, dear as a right eye, or useful as a right hand? Pluck it out, tear it off without hesitation or regret, for is it not better to make this sacrifice, than to lose eternal salvation, and endure everlasting torments? Was it self-dependence, self-confidence? Now put your case into the hand of Omnipotence, and call upon God. Ask for the Holy Ghost to renew, to sanctify, and to keep your soul. Learn from your past failure what to do, and what to avoid for the future. Believe the gospel, which declares that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. It was faith that was wanting, in the first instance, to give permanence to your religious impressions. There was no belief, no full persuasion, no practical conviction, of the truth of the gospel. Your religious feelings were like the stream raised by external and adventitious causes, but there was no spring. You stopped short of believing; you made no surrender of the soul to Christ, nor committed yourselves to him, to be justified by his righteousness, and to be sanctified by his spirit. This do and live.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ON DECISION OF CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

How deep, and how just a reproach did the prophet cast upon the tribes of Israel, when he addressed to

the assembled multitudes on Mount Carmel, that memorable interrogation, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him." From this it appears they were in a state of indecision, in reference to the most momentous question in the universe, not wholly satisfied that they were doing right in worshipping Baal, yet not sufficiently resolute to abandon his service. What a criminal, what a degrading, what a wretched state of mind! Not decided whom they would acknowledge to be their God!—To whom they would pay divine homage! But is this state of mind, my dear children, uncommon? By no means. To how many of the youth who attend our places of devotional resort, could we address, with propriety, the same question, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How many are there who can go no farther than Agrippa, when he said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Almost! Only almost persuaded to be a Christian! What a melancholy thought!!

In the last chapter you saw, in the character of *Inconstants*, an instance of this indecision. Did you admire it? Impossible. What was wanting? *Decision*. But what do I mean by decision? "A fixed purpose, not made in haste, but with much deliberation; not in our own strength, but in reliance on the grace of God; without delay, and at all risks, to seek the salvation of the soul through faith in Christ, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." It includes an inflexible severity of conviction, that this is the one great thing we have in this world to do, and such a concentration of all the energies of our soul in this mighty business, as to idle spectators shall put on the appearance of enthusiasm. It is such a purpose as subordinates every thing to itself. In opposition to transient devotion, it is permanent; in opposition to fluctuating opinions, it is a fixed abiding resolution; in opposition to mere occasional acts, it is an indelible character, an indestructible habit. In short, it is faith in opposition to mere opinion and speculation: it is actually receiving Christ instead of talking about him. It is not like the vapor which, after attracting every eye by its meteoric splendor, vanisheth away while yet the surprised and delighted spectator beholds its luminous course; but it is like the shining light which holds on in its way in the heavens, and shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It is attended with a relinquishment of former associations, former pursuits and pleasures, and the embracing all such as are on the side of religion. We have a fine instance of this in the heroic leader of the hosts of the Lord, when looking round upon the wavering tribes of Israel, he exclaimed, "Let others do what they will, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Another example, equally splendid, was presented by the great apostle of the Gentiles, when with the perspective of his suffering career before his eyes, he gave utterance to that burst of sublime heroism,— "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I might fulfil the ministry I have received of the Lord, and finish my course with joy." Similar to this is the language of a decided Christian: "Self-denial, ridicule, rage, mortification, loss, all are nothing to me, so that I may believe the gospel, live in the fear of God, die in his favor, and, through the merits of Christ, be received to everlasting glory."

It will be proper to state here the reasons why so many that have strong impressions occasionally made upon their minds, are not thoroughly and decidedly engaged in the practice of religion. Some of these will be found in the chapter "On the Obstacles of Piety," but there are others which are

still more specific in reference to the case before us.

There is in many, *a want of deep serious consideration*. They do not follow up the subject of religion, even when it has been impressed with some degree of force upon their hearts. When emotions have been excited they do not cherish them; but go to their usual conversation, company, or business, instead of entering into their closets to examine their hearts, and to apply the subjects they have heard. I have read of a person, who being an officer in the army, then about to embark for the continent, came to a Christian friend, and told him that he had a great many serious thoughts about the state of his soul, and was resolved to lead a new life; but, said he, there is such a company I must be with to-night; I wish I could disengage myself from them. His friend, of course, attempted to dissuade him from joining the party. He, notwithstanding, went to them, forgot all his serious thoughts when there; was drawn into the revelry of the night; the following day went abroad; and the next news his friend heard of him was that he was killed in action. Thus his vain companions extinguished his serious thoughts, diverted his good resolutions, and, by his own consent, robbed him of his eternal salvation.

Another cause of irresolution is, *the feeble and uncertain perceptions which many persons have of divine and spiritual things*. They have a dim view of the truths of revelation, but they appear like objects in a mist, too indistinct to be made the matter of pursuit. Hence it is of tremendous consequence that when a young person becomes in any degree serious about religion, he should instantly betake himself to all proper means for informing his judgment on the nature of true religion. He should read the Scriptures with intense application of mind, listen to the preaching of the word with great fixedness of attention, and peruse good books with much seriousness of mind.\*

*The dominion of some one prevailing sin*, if cherished and indulged, has a most fatal influence in preventing decision. Herod would do many things, but not part from Herodias. Felix was moved by Paul's preaching, but he would not give up covetousness. Thus it is with many; they admit the claims of religion; admire its beauty; are moved by its force; resolve to submit to its influence; but then there is some besetting sin, which, when they come to the point, they cannot be induced to sacrifice. Every plant has some leading root which connects it with the soil in which it grows, on which more than any of the rest it is dependant for support and nourishment. So it is in the human heart; there is in most persons some prevailing corruption of nature, which more than any of the rest holds the heart to an unregenerate state, and to which very particular attention must be paid in the business of religion. This sin may be different in different persons; but whatever it be, it must be destroyed, or it will destroy us.

*Fear of persecution* operates in many to prevent decision. You are deterred probably, my children, from giving up yourselves to the influence of piety, by the apprehensions that you shall be called to endure the ridicule of those with whom you have been accustomed to associate, and who, being unfriendly to religion, will vent their scorn and contempt on those who submit to its claims. It is impossible that I can be so ignorant of the irreconcilable enmity existing, and destined ever to exist, between religion and the depravity of human nature; or the usual practice of those who hate religion, as to promise

you an exemption from the sneers of the scorner, if you walk in the paths of wisdom. The only weapons which many are able to wield against Christianity are sneers; for there is no mind so imbecile, no fool so foolish, as not to be able to laugh; the individual, who could no more argue than an infant could use the sword or brandish the spear of Goliath, can shoot out the lip, and cry methodist, puritan, and fanatic. The power to argue is comparatively rare, but almost every village in the kingdom will furnish a mob of little minds, to follow after religion as it passes by, and which, like the children of Bethel, persecuting the prophet of the Lord, will ridicule its venerable form.\* A morbid sensibility to shame, I am perfectly convinced, has kept not a few young people from piety. They cannot bear the broad loud laugh, the contemptuous sneer, the witty jest. They cannot endure the attack of the profane, nor the raillery of the impious. They blush and conceal their secret attachment to piety directly if it is assailed. But, my children, where is the dignity, or the courage of your mind? Are you indeed convinced of the truth of Christianity, and the justice of its claims, and suffer yourselves to be vanquished by the laugh of folly? What! flee from the enemy of your souls, and surrender your salvation, when he only hisses at you in the skin of a fool! What though the world were to unite its scorn; shall this deter you from acting, when God, truth, heaven, the Bible, conscience, salvation, saints, angels, are all on your side? What! when your spirit has plumed her wings of faith and hope for flight to heaven, shall she give up the dazzling object of her high ambition, and cower down on earth, because she is watched and ridiculed by the witling? Or shall her eagle pinions be blown from their lofty course by the scoff of the scorner? *Be decided*, and all this mean and feeble kind of persecution will soon cease. Before that sublime and unbending decision, which dares to be singular, which nothing can divert from its purpose, which nothing can diminish in its ardor, which clings the closer to its object for all the efforts that are employed to detach it from the pursuit; I say, before that inflexible spirit, it is astonishing to see how the space clears away, and how soon she is left to pursue her course, while all the tribe of little, pecking, cavilling, noisy minds, drop down into their hedges, and leave the eagle to her course.

"This invincibility of temper," says the profoundest and most eloquent essayist in the English language, "will often make the scoffers themselves tired of the sport. They begin to feel that against such a man it is a poor kind of hostility to laugh. There is nothing that people are more mortified to spend in vain than their scorn. A man of the right kind would say, upon an intimation that he is opposed by scorn, 'They will laugh, will they? I have something else to do than to trouble myself about their mirth. I do not care if the whole neighborhood were to laugh in a chorus. I should indeed be sorry to see or hear such a number of fools, but pleased enough to find that they did not consider me one of their stamp. The good to result from my project will not be less, because vain and shallow minds, that cannot understand it, are diverted at it and at me. What should I think of my pur-

\* Never did Satan invent a more successful weapon against religion than ridicule. This apparently mean and contemptible engine, like the pike-head of modern warfare, may be circulated widely, and put into ten thousand hands, which could make nothing of a more dignified kind of instrument. By this means he can arm the *levy en masse* of his dominions, who could do nothing in the ranks of the regular troops, or with the artillery of infidelity.

\* Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," is a standard treatise.



suits, if every trivial thoughtless being could comprehend or would applaud them; and of myself, if my courage needed levity and ignorance for their allies, or could shrink at their sneers?"\*

My children, think of the importance of the matter to be decided upon—the service of God, the pursuit of immortality, the salvation of the soul—and shall a false shame deter you from the pursuit? Think of the example of Jesus Christ, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame. Look at this divine sufferer, as he is presented to us in the hall of Pilate, when he was made the object of every species of scorn and indignity, and will you shrink from a few sneers and scoffs for *Him*? Remember our Lord's most alarming language, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, and with the holy angels." Anticipate, if you can, the shame, the disgrace, the mortification, the torment, of being disowned, rejected, and abandoned by Christ, before assembled worlds; and let that be a preservative against being ashamed of him now.

It is time now to set before you the *evils of indecision*, as a motive to induce you to seek after the opposite temper.

Such a temper is most *unreasonable*, if you consider both the importance of the subject, and the means you possess of coming to a speedy and right decision. Is it a matter of trifling moment? Yes, if God, and eternity, and salvation, and heaven and hell are trifles. If religion be a trifle, where, in all the universe, shall we find any thing that is important? Irresolution here, is to be undetermined whether you will be the friend or the enemy of God; whether you will live in this world under the favor or the curse of Jehovah, and in the world to come, in the torments of the bottomless pit, or the felicities of the heavenly city; whether you will choose condemnation or salvation. There is no language which can describe, there is no allusion which can illustrate, the folly of indecision in religion. The irresolution of a slave, whether he should continue to groan in fetters, or be free; of the leper, whether he should still be covered with the most loathsome disease, or enjoy the glow of health; of the condemned criminal, whether he should choose an honorable life, or the most torturing and ignominious death; is not marked with such desperate folly as an undecided state of mind about personal religion. *The Scripture demands decision*, and it demands it in these striking words, "See, I have set before thee this day life and death, good and evil; therefore choose." Yet some are undecided whether they will serve God, their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and inherit eternal life; or yield themselves to Satan, their destroyer, and suffer the bitter pains of eternal death. If the matter were involved in obscurity, as to what was your duty or your interest, there would be some apology; but when both are as clear as the day, the folly of indecision is so palpably manifest, as to entail a most fearful degree of guilt upon the conscience of the irresolute.

Indecision is *contemptible*. "Unstable as water,

thou shalt not excel," is a character which no one ever pretended to admire. In the ordinary affairs of life, indecision renders a man an object of pity or contempt. It is a poor disgraceful thing not to be able to answer with some degree of firmness to the questions, What will you be? What will you do? It is a pitiable thing to see a creature, with all the faculties of a rational being about him, so irresolute and undecided, as almost to wish that he could exchange reason for instinct, in order that he might be spared the trouble of thinking, and the pain of choosing: a poor, dependant, powerless creature, that floats like a feather or a chip along the stream of time, belonging to whatever can seize him; and without one effort of resistance, whirled in every little eddy, and intercepted by every little twig.—But how much more disgraceful is this irresoluteness of mind in the affairs of religion, where there are so many means, and so many motives for coming to a just conclusion. To be blown about like thistle-down by every wind of doctrine, and carried just wherever the gust or the current impels, is as dishonorable to our understanding as it is detrimental to our salvation.

Indecision is *uncomfortable*. Suspense is always painful. Hesitation as to the steps we shall take, and the conduct we shall pursue, is a most undesirable state of mind: and this uneasiness will be in exact proportion to the importance of the business to be decided, and to the degree of compunction we feel for not deciding upon a course, which we cannot help thinking, upon the whole, is the right one. My children, the undecided cannot be altogether easy in their present fluctuating state of mind. No: directed one way by conviction, and dragged another by inclination: determining at one time to serve God fully, and at another smarting under the guilt of broken vows: resolved on the Sabbath, and irresolute on the Monday: sometimes advancing with courage, and then again retreating with fear and shame: no, *this* is not the way to be happy.—You may as well expect peace on the field of battle, as in the bosom where such a conflict is carried on. Look up to God, and ask for grace to terminate by decided piety the dreadful strife, if indeed it be carried on in your breast.

Indecision is *dangerous*. Consider the uncertainty of life. How soon and how suddenly the King of Terrors may arrest you, and bear you to his dark domain. Some acute, inflammatory disease, in a few days may extinguish life; or a fatal accident, which leaves you no leisure even to bid adieu to those you love on earth, may hurry you into eternity. *And then what becomes of you?* In a state of indecision you are unprepared for death, for judgment, for heaven. You are within the flood-mark of divine vengeance. God accounts all those to be decidedly against him, who are not decidedly for him. There is, properly speaking, no middle ground between regeneracy and unregeneracy, between conversion and unconversion, and therefore he that does not occupy the one, is found within the limits of the other. You are a child or an enemy of God. Whatever may be your occasional relenings, your transient emotions, your ineffectual desires, if you do not become decidedly pious, God will take no account of these things, but treat you, if you die in this state, as one that had decided against him.—Can you then linger, when death and hell do not linger? Can you halt, hesitate, and fluctuate, when death may the very next hour decide the business for you? And, oh! if you *should* die without decision, what will be *your* reflections, and what will be *ours*? How bitterly will you exclaim, "Fool that I was, to let any thing interfere with my eternal salvation; to let any thing interpose between my soul and her everlasting welfare. Why, why did I

\* See Foster's "Essay on Decision of Character." I should deem it an insult to my readers, to suppose they have not read these essays, and not less so to their author, to suppose that they needed my recommendation. I cannot help, however, enjoining on my readers to read the essay from which the above extract is made, with the resolution to seek, and the prayer to obtain, all that decision which is there so eloquently described, not only in reference to every good work in general, but to religion in particular.

hesitate? I saw the excellence, I coveted the possession of religion. Often I felt my heart rising to go and surrender unreservedly to God; I wept, I prayed, I resolved; but that accursed lust, in which I took pleasure, held me fast, and rather than tear myself from it, I let go the hope of eternal life. I was afraid of a little ridicule, which I ought to have disregarded or despised, and when I seemed near the kingdom was ruined by indecision. While I hesitated death seized me, and now I shall be exhibited by the light of this flame in which I burn for ever, an awful proof of the folly and the danger of indecision. Wo, eternal wo upon my wretched spirit!"

Spare yourselves, my dear children, these dreadful reflections, this inconceivable torment. Without an hour's delay, resign yourselves to God and the influence of true religion. Decide the doubtful point. Believe and obey.

## CHAPTER X.

### ON THE PLEASURES OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

A DESIRE after happiness, my dear children, is inseparable from the human mind. It is the natural and healthy craving of our spirit; an appetite which we have neither will nor power to destroy, and for which all mankind are busily employed in making provision. This is as natural, as for birds to fly, or fishes to swim. For this the scholar and the philosopher, who think it consists in knowledge, pore over their books and their apparatus, light the midnight lamp, and keep frequent vigils, when the world around them is asleep. For this the warrior, who thinks that happiness is inseparably united with fame, pursues that bubble through the gory field of conflict, and is as lavish of his life, as if it were not worth a soldier's pay. The worldling, with whom happiness and *wealth* are kindred terms, worships daily at the shrine of Mammon, and offers earnest prayers for the golden shower. The voluptuary gratifies every craving sense, rejoices in the midnight revel, renders himself vile, and yet tells you he is in the chase of happiness. The ambitious man, conceiving that the great desideratum blossoms on the sceptre, and hangs in rich clusters from the throne, consumes one half of his life, and embitters the other half, in climbing the giddy elevation of royalty. All these, however, have confessed their disappointment; and have retired from the stage exclaiming, in reference to happiness, what Brutus, just before he stabbed himself, did in reference to virtue, "I have pursued thee every where, and found thee nothing but a name." This, however, is a mistake; for both virtue and happiness are glorious realities, and if they are not found, it is merely because they are not sought from the right sources.

We may affirm of pleasure what Job did of wisdom, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. But where shall *happiness* be found, and where is the place of *enjoyment*?" "Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. Whence then cometh *happiness*, and where is the place of *enjoyment*?" "seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We

have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did he see it and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, all her paths are peace."

Happiness has no other equivalent term than religion, and this is a moral synonym. If, indeed, the case were *otherwise*, and religion, so far as the present world is concerned, entailed nothing but wretchedness, yet, as it leads to eternal felicity in the world to come, it is most manifestly our interest, to attend to its claims. The poor Hindoo devotee, who endures all kind of tortures under the idea that it is the only way to eternal felicity, acts with perfect rationality, if you allow his data. A life protracted to the length of Methuselah's, and filled with penances and pilgrimages, should be willingly and thankfully endured, if salvation could be procured by no other means. In the prospect of eternity, with heaven spreading out its ineffable glories, and hell uncovering its dreadful horrors, the only question which a rational creature should allow himself to ask is, "What is necessary to avoid the torments of the one, and secure the felicities of the other?" and on being told "Religion," he should apply with all the energies of his soul to this great business, without scarcely allowing himself to ask whether its duties are pleasant or irksome. The man who is journeying to take possession of a kingdom, scarcely thinks it worth his while to inquire whether the road be through a wilderness or a paradise. It is enough for him to know, that it is the only road to the throne. Hence, the representation of the *pleasures* of religion, is a sort of gratuity in this subject. It serves, however, to leave those still more destitute of excuse, who live in the neglect of piety; and, in this view, may have still greater power to rouse the conscience.

1. That religion is pleasure, will appear, if you consider *what part of our nature it more particularly employs and gratifies*.

It is not the gratification of the *senses*, or of the animal part of our nature, but a provision for the *immaterial and immortal mind*. The mind of man is an image not only of God's spirituality, but of his infinity. It is not like the senses, limited to this or that kind of object; as the sight intermeddles not with that which effects the smell; but with an universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon, and takes them all in. It is, as I may say, an ocean, into which all the little rivulets of sensation, both external and internal, discharge themselves. Now this is that part of man to which the exercises of religion properly belong. The pleasures of the understanding, in the contemplation of truth, have been sometimes so great, so intense, so engrossing of all the powers of the soul, that there has been no room left for any other kind of pleasure. How short of this are the delights of the epicure! How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating, and of the thinking *man*! Indeed, says Dr. South, as different as the silence of an Archimedes in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a sow at her wash. Nothing is comparable to the pleasures of mind; these are enjoyed by the spirits above, by Jesus Christ, and the great and blessed God.

Think what objects religion brings before the mind, as the sources of its pleasure: no less than the great God himself, and that both in his nature and in his works. For the eye of religion, like that of the eagle, directs itself chiefly to the sun, to a glory that neither admits of a superior nor an equal. The mind is conversant, in the exercises



of piety, with all the most stupendous events that have ever occurred in the history of the universe, or that ever will transpire till the close of time.—The creation of the world; its government by a universal Providence; its redemption by the death of Christ; its conversion by the power of the Holy Ghost; its trial before the bar of God; the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body; the certainty of an eternal existence; the secrets of the unseen state; subjects, all of them of the loftiest and sublimest kind, which have engaged the inquiries of the profoundest intellects, are the matter of contemplation to real piety. What topics are these for our reason, under the guidance of religion, to study: what an ocean to swim in, what a heaven to soar in: what heights to measure, what depths to fathom. Here are subjects, which, from their infinite vastness, must be ever new, and ever fresh; which can be never laid aside as dry or empty. If novelty is the parent of pleasure, here it may be found; for although the subject itself is the same, some new view of it, some fresh discovery of its wonders, is ever bursting upon the mind of the devout and attentive inquirer after truth.

How then can religion be otherwise than pleasant, when it is the exercise of the noble faculties of the mind, upon the sublimest topics of mental investigation; the voluntary, excursive, endless pursuits of the human understanding in the region of eternal truth. Never was there a more interesting or important inquiry than that proposed by Pilate to the illustrious Prisoner at his bar; and if the latter thought it not proper to answer it, it was to show that the question was insignificant, but to condemn the light and flippant manner in which a subject so important was taken up. Religion can answer the question, and with an ecstasy greater than that of the ancient mathematician, exclaims, "I have found it: I have found it." The Bible is not only true, but truth. It contains that which deserves this sublime emphasis. It settles the disputes of ages, and of philosophers, and makes known what is truth, and where it is to be found. It brings us from amongst the quicksands and shelves, and rocks of skepticism, ignorance, and error, and shows that goodly land, in quest of which myriads of minds have sailed, and multitudes have been wrecked; and religion is setting our foot on this shore, and dwelling in the region of eternal truth.

2. That a religious life is pleasant, is evident from the nature of religion itself.

Religion is a principle of *spiritual life* in the soul. Now all the exercises and acts of vitality are agreeable. To see, to hear, to taste, to walk, are all agreeable, because they are the voluntary energies of inward life. So religion, in all its duties, is the exercise of a living principle in the soul; it is a new spiritual existence. Piety is a spiritual taste. Hence it is said, "If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious." No matter what the object of a taste is, the exercises of it are always agreeable.—The painter goes with delight to his picture; the musician to his instrument; the sculptor to his bust; because they have a *taste* for these pursuits. The same feeling of delight attends the Christian to the exercises of godliness; and this is his language, "It is a good thing to give thanks, and to draw near to God. O how I love thy law! it is sweeter to my taste than honey. How amiable are thy tabernacles." Religion, where it is real, is the natural element of a Christian; and every creature rejoices in its own appropriate sphere. If, my children, you consider true piety with disgust, as a hard, unnatural, involuntary thing, you are totally ignorant of its nature, entirely destitute of its influence, and no wonder you cannot attach to it the idea of plea-

sure: but viewing it as it ought to be viewed, in the light of a new nature, you will perceive that it admits of most exalted delight.

3. Consider the *miseries which it prevents*.

It does not, it is true, prevent sickness, poverty, or misfortune: it does not fence off from the wilderness of this world, a mystic inclosure, within which the ills of life never intrude. No; these things happen to all alike: but how small a portion of human wretchedness flows from these sources, compared with that which arises from the dispositions of the heart. "The mind is its own place, can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Men carry the springs of their happiness or misery in their own bosom. Hence it is said of the wicked, "that they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, which is never at peace, but continually casting up mire and dirt." In contrast with which, it is affirmed that "the work of righteousness is peace; and that the good man shall be satisfied from himself." Would you behold the misery entailed by *pride*, look at Haman; by *covetousness*, look at Ahab; by *malice*, look at Cain; by *profaneness and sensuality*, united with the forebodings of a guilty conscience, look at Belshazzar; by *envy*, and a consciousness of being rejected of God, look at Saul; by *revenge*, look at Herodias writhing beneath the accusations of John, and thirsting for his blood; by *apostacy*, look at Judas. Religion would have prevented all this, and it will prevent similar misery in you. Harken to the confessions of the outcast in the land of his banishment; of the felon in his irons, and in his dungeon; of the prostitute expiring upon her bed of straw; of the malefactor at the gallows—"Wretched creature that I am, abhorred of men, accursed of God! To what have my crimes brought me?" Religion, my children, prevents all this; all that wretchedness which is the result of crime, is cut off by the influence of genuine piety. Misery prevented, is happiness gained.

4. Dwell upon the *privileges it confers*.

To a man who is a partaker of its genuine influence, all the sins he has committed, be they ever so numerous or so great, are all forgiven, and he is introduced to the bliss of pardoned guilt; he is restored to the favor of that Great Being, whose smile is life, and lights up heaven with joy; whose frown is death, and fills all hell with woe. But I cannot describe these privileges in such brilliant language as has been employed by a transatlantic author:—"Regeneration is of the highest importance to man, as a subject of the divine government. With his former disposition he was a rebel against God, and with this he becomes cheerfully an obedient subject. Of an enemy he becomes a friend; of an apostate he becomes a child. From the debased, hateful, miserable character of sin, he makes a final escape, and begins the glorious and eternal career of virtue. With his *character* his destination is equally changed; in his native condition he was a child of wrath, an object of abhorrence, and an heir of woe. Evil, in an unceasing, and interminable progress, was his lot; the regions of sorrow and despair his everlasting home; and fiends and fiend-like men his eternal companions. On his character good beings looked with detestation, and on his ruin with pity; while evil beings beheld both with that satanic pleasure, which a reprobate mind can enjoy at the sight of companionship in turpitude and destruction.

"But when he becomes a subject of this great and happy change of character, all things connected with him are also changed. His unbelief im-

\* See more on this subject in the chapter on the Temporal Advantages of Piety.

penitence, hatred of God, rejection of Christ, and resistance of the Spirit of Grace, he has voluntarily and ingeniously renounced; no more rebellious, impious, or ungrateful, he has assumed the amiable spirit of submission, repentance, confidence, hope, gratitude, and love. The image of his Maker is stamped upon his mind, and begins there to shine with moral and eternal beauty. The seeds of immortality have there sprung up, as in a kindly soil; and warmed by the life-giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and refreshed by the dewy influence of the Spirit of Grace, rise, and bloom and flourish, with increasing vigor. In him sin and the world and the flesh daily decay, and daily announce their approaching dissolution; while the soul continually assumes new life and virtue, and is animated with superior and undying energy.—He is now a joint heir with Christ, and the destined inhabitant of heaven; the gates of glory and of happiness are already opened to receive him, and the joy of saints and angels has been renewed over his repentance; all around him is peace—all before him purity and transport. God is his Father; Christ his Redeemer; and the Spirit of truth his Sanctifier. Heaven is his eternal habitation; virtue is his immortal character; and cherubim and seraphim and all the children of light, are his companions for ever. Henceforth he becomes of course a rich blessing to the universe; all good beings, nay, God himself, will rejoice in him for ever, as a valuable accession to the great kingdom of righteousness, as a real addition to the mass of created good, and as an humble, but faithful and honorable instrument of the everlasting praise of heaven. He is a vessel of infinite mercy; an illustrious trophy of the cross; a gem in the crown of glory, which adorns the Redeemer of mankind.\*

Who, my children, can read this animated description of the privileges of true piety (and it is not an exaggerated account) without secretly longing to be a child of God? What are all the bright distinctions of an earthly nature, after which envy pines in secret, or ambition rages in public, compared with this? Crowns are splendid baubles, gold is sordid dust, and all the gratifications of sense but vanity and vexation of spirit, when weighed against such splendid immunities as these.

##### 5. Consider the consolations it imparts.

Our world has been called, in the language of poetry, a vale of tears, and human life a bubble, raised from those tears, and inflated by sighs, which after floating a little while, decked with a few gaudy colors, is touched by the hand of death, and dissolves. Poverty, disease, misfortune, unkindness, inconstancy, death, all assail the travellers as they journey onward to eternity through this gloomy valley; and what is to comfort them but *religion*?

The consolations of religion are neither few nor small; they arise in part from those things which we have already mentioned in this chapter; *i.e.* from the exercise of the understanding on the revealed truths of God's word, from the impulses of the spiritual life within us, and from a reflection upon our spiritual privileges; but there are some others, which, though partially implied in these things, deserve a special enumeration and distinct consideration.

A *good conscience*, which the wise man says is a perpetual feast, sustains a high place amongst the comforts of genuine piety. It is unquestionably true, that a man's happiness is in the keeping of his conscience; all the sources of his felicity are under the command of this faculty. "A wounded spirit who can bear!" A troubled conscience converts a paradise into a hell, for it is the flame of hell kindled on

earth; but a quiet conscience would illuminate the horrors of the deepest dungeon with the beams of heavenly day; the former has often rendered men like tormented fiends amidst an elysium of delights, while the latter has taught the songs of cherubim to martyrs in the prison or the flames. Religion furnishes a good conscience; by faith in the blood of Christ it takes away guilt towards God, and by a holy life it keeps the conscience clear towards man. It first makes it good by justification, and then keeps it good by sanctification. What trouble may not a man bear beneath the smiles of an approving conscience! If this be calm and serene, the storms of affliction, which rage without, can as little disturb the comfort of the mind, as the fury of the wintry tempest can do to alarm the inhabitants of a well-built, well-stored mansion.

In addition to this, religion comforts the mind with the assurance of an all-wise, all-pervading Providence, so minute in its superintendence and control, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father; a superintendence which is excluded from no point of space, no moment of time, and overlooks not the meanest creature in existence. Nor is this all; for the word of God assures the believer that "*all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.*" Nothing that imagination could conceive, is more truly consolatory than this, to be assured that all things, however painful at the time, not excepting the failure of our favorite schemes, the disappointment of our fondest hopes, the loss of our dearest comforts, shall be overruled by infinite wisdom for the promotion of our ultimate good. This is a spring of comfort whose waters never fail.

Religion consoles also by making manifest some of the benefits of affliction, even at the time it is endured. It crucifies the world, mortifies sin, quickens prayer, extracts the balmy sweets of the promises, endears the Saviour; and, to crown all, it directs the mind to that glorious state, where the days of our mourning shall be ended: that happy country where God shall wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow or crying. Nothing so composes the mind, and helps it bear the load of trouble which God may lay upon it, as the near prospect of its termination. Religion shows the weather-beaten mariner the haven of eternal repose, where no storms arise, and the sea is ever calm; it exhibits to the weary traveller the city of habitation, within whose walls he will find a pleasant home, rest from his labors, and friends to welcome his arrival: it discloses to the wounded warrior his native country, where the alarms of war and the dangers of conflict will be no more encountered, but undisturbed peace for ever reign. In that one word, HEAVEN, religion provides a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care.

Here, then, is the pleasure of that wisdom which is from above; it is not only enjoyed in prosperity, but continues to refresh us, and most powerfully to refresh us, in adversity; a remark which will not apply to any other kind of pleasure.

In the hour of misfortune, when a man, once in happy circumstances, sits down, amidst the wreck of all his comforts, and sees nothing but the fragments of his fortune for his wife and family, what, in this storm of affliction, is to cheer him but religion; and this can do it, and enable him to say, "although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!" What but *religion* can comfort the poor laborer in that



gloomy season when times are bad, and work is scarce, and he hardly knows where to procure his next meal? What can comfort the suffering female in that long and dreadful season, when, wasting away in a deep decline, she lies, night after night, consumed by fever, and day after day, convulsed by coughing? Tell me, what can send a ray of comfort to her dark scene of woe, or a drop of consolation to her parched and thirsting lips, but *religion*? And when the agonized parent, with a heart half broken by the conduct of a prodigal son, exclaims—"O! who can tell how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" what, in that season of torture, can pour a drop of balm into the wounded spirit, but *religion*? And when we occupy the bed-side of a departing friend, "the dreadful post of observation darker every hour," what but *religion* can sustain the mind, and calm the tumult of the soul? what, but this, can enable us to bear, with even tolerable composure, the pang of separation? And we too must die: and here is the excellence of piety; it follows us where no other friend can follow us, down into the dark valley of the shadow of death, stands by us when the last hand has quitted its grasp, reserves its mightiest energies for that most awful conflict, presents to the eye of faith the visions of glory rising up beyond the sepulchre, and angels advancing to receive us from the hand of earthly friends, to bear us to the presence of a smiling God.

Other sources of pleasure are open only during the season of health and prosperity. Admitting that they were all which their most impassioned admirers contend for, what can balls, routs, plays, cards, do, in the season of sickness, misfortune, or death? Alas! alas! they exist then only in recollection, and the recollection of them is painful.

6. The pleasures of religion appear in *the graces it implants*.

"And now abideth these three, Faith, Hope, Charity."

*Faith* is the leading virtue of Christianity. To believe, in any case, where the report is welcome, and the evidence of its truth convincing, is a pleasing exercise of the mind; how much more so in this case, where the testimony to be believed is the glad tidings of salvation, and the evidence of its truth most entirely satisfactory? *Hope* is a most delightful exercise. The pleasures of hope have formed a theme for the poet; and it is evident that these pleasures must be in proportion to the importance of the object desired, and the grounds that exist to expect its accomplishment. What, then, must be the influence of that hope which is full of immortality, which has the glory of heaven for its object, and the truth of God for its basis! which, as it looks towards its horizon, sees the shadowy forms of eternal felicity, rising, expanding, brightening, and advancing, every moment. *Love* is a third virtue, implanted and cherished in the soul by religion. Need I describe the pleasures connected with a pure and virtuous affection? Religion is love—love of the purest and sublimest kind; this is its essence, all else, but its earthly attire, which it throws off as Elijah did his mantle, when it ascends to the skies. The delight of love must be in proportion to the excellence of its object, and the strength of its own propensity towards that object. What, then, must be the pleasure of that love which has God as its object, and which consists in complacency in his glories, gratitude for his mercies, submission to his will, and the enjoyment of his favor! This is a heavenly feeling, which brings us into communion with angels, and anticipates on earth the enjoyments of eternity. Submission, patience, meekness, gentleness, justice, compassion, zeal, are also among the graces which true religion implants in the human soul;

which, like lovely flowers, adorn it with indescribable beauty, and refresh it with the most delicious fragrance.

7. Consider the *duties which religion enjoins*, and you will find in each of these a spring of hallowed pleasure.

How delightful an exercise is *prayer*! "Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempests; it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness." It is pleasant to tell our sorrows to any one; how much more to him who is omnipotent in power, infallible in wisdom, and infinite in compassion! With prayer is connected *praise*, that elevated action of the soul, in which she seems at the time to be learning motion and melody from an angel. How pleasant an exercise is the *perusal of the Scriptures*! In prayer we speak to God, and in the Bible God speaks to us, and both confer upon us honor indescribable. Passing by the antiquity of its history, the pathos of its narratives, the beauty of its imagery, how sublime are its doctrines, how precious its promises, how free its invitations, how salutary its warnings, how intense its devotions! "Precious Bible! when weighed against thee, all other books are but as the small dust of the balance." Nor less pleasant is *the holy remembrance of the Sabbath*. "I was glad," exclaims the Christian, "when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord;" and there, when standing within the gates of Zion, surrounded with the multitude that keep holy day, he repeats, amidst the years of his manhood the song of his childhood, and from the fulness of his joy, he exclaims—

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see

A whole assembly worship thee;

At once they sing, at once they pray,

They hear of heaven, and learn the way."

The sweetly-solemn engagements of *the sacramental feast*; the flow of brotherly love, called forth by *social prayer*, together with the *ardor of benevolence*, inspired by the support of public religious institutions; in these exercises is true happiness to be found, if indeed it is to be found any where on earth.

8. As a last proof of the pleasures derived from religion, I may appeal to *the experience of its friends*. Here the evidences accumulate by myriads on earth, and millions in heaven. Who that ever felt its influence, will doubt its tendency to produce delight? Go, go, my children, to the saints of the most high God, and collect *their* testimony, and you shall be convinced "that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Go not to the Christian of *doubtful* character, for he has only just religion enough to make him miserable; go to the most holy, and you shall find *them* the most happy.

And then there are also two or three other circumstances which are connected with the pleasures of religion that deserve attention. *It is pleasure that never satiates or wearies*. Can the epicure, the voluptuary, the drunkard, the ball frequenter, say this of *their* delights? How short is the interval, how easy the transition, between a pleasure and a burden. If sport refreshes a man when he is weary, it also wearies when he is refreshed. The most devoted pleasure-hunter in existence, were he bound to his sensual delights every day, would find it an intolerable burden, and fly to the spade and the mattock for a diversion from the misery of an unintermitted pleasure. Custom may render continued labor tolerable, but not continued pleasure. All pleasures that affect the body must needs weary, because they transport; and all transportation is violence;

and no violence can be lasting, but determines upon the falling of the spirits, which are not able to keep up that height of motion that the pleasure of the sense raises them to: and therefore how generally does an immoderate laughter end in a sigh, which is only nature's recovering herself after a force done to it; but the religious pleasure of a well-disposed mind moves gently, and therefore constantly; it does not affect by rapture and ecstasy, but is like the pleasure of health, which is still and sober, yet greater and stronger than those which call up the senses with grosser and more affecting impressions."

And as all the grosser pleasures of sense weary, and all the sports and recreations soon pall upon the appetite, so, under some circumstances, do the more elevated enjoyments of exalted rank, agreeable company, and lively conversation; it is religion alone that preserves an unfading freshness, an undying charm, an inexhaustible power to please; it is this alone of all our pleasures which never cloy, never surfeits, but increases the appetite the more it gratifies it, and leaves it, after the richest feast, prepared and hungry for a still more splendid banquet.

And then another ennobling property of the pleasure that arises from religion, is, *that as the sources and the seat of it are in a man's own breast, it is not in the power of any thing without him to destroy it, or take it away.* Upon God alone is he dependant for its enjoyment. Upon how many other agents, and upon what numerous contingencies, over which he can exercise no control, is the votary of worldly pleasure dependant for his bliss. How many things which he cannot command, are necessary to make up the machinery of his schemes. What trifles may disappoint him of his expected gratification, or rob him of his promised delights. A variable atmosphere, or a human mind, no less variable; a want of punctuality in others, or a want of health in himself: these, and a thousand other things, might be enumerated as circumstances, upon the mercy of each one of which the enjoyment of worldly pleasure depends. "But the good man shall be satisfied from himself." "Whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him," said Jesus Christ, "shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The piety of his heart, produced by the Holy Ghost, is this well-spring of pleasure, which a good man carries every where with him, wherever he goes. He is independent of all the contingencies of life for his bliss. "It is an easy and a portable pleasure, such an one as he carries about in his bosom, without alarming the eye or the envy of the world. A man putting all his pleasures into this one, is like a traveller putting all his goods, as it were, into one jewel; the value is the same, and the convenience greater."

"Nor is this kind of pleasure out of the reach of any outward violence only; but even those things also, which make a closer impression upon us, which are the irresistible decays of nature, have yet no influence at all upon this. For when age itself, which of all things in the world will not be baffled or defied, shall begin to arrest, seize, and remind us of our mortality, by pains, aches, and deadness of limbs, and dulness of senses, yet then the pleasure of the mind shall be in its full youth, vigor, and freshness. A palsy may as soon shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair the delight of conscience; for it lies within, it centres in the heart, it grows into the very substance of the soul, so that it accompanies a man to his grave; he never outlives it, and that for this cause only, because he cannot outlive himself."

How comes it to pass then, that in opposition to

all this, the opinion has gained ground that religion leads to melancholy? *The irreligious judge of it by their own feelings; and as they are not conscious of any pleasurable emotions, excited by sacred things, they conclude that others are in like manner destitute of them.* But is *their* testimony to be received, before that of the individual who has tried and found it by experience to be bliss? Again, irreligious people form their opinion by *what they see in many professors*, some of whom, though professing godliness, are destitute of its power; and being more actuated by a spirit of the world than of piety, are strangers to the peace that passeth all understanding; others are not yet brought out of that deep dejection, with which the earlier stages of conviction are sometimes attended. The sinner, when first arrested in his thoughtless career, is filled with deep dismay, and the most poignant grief; reviewed in this state of mind, his appearance may produce the idea that religion is the parent of melancholy. But wait, he that sows in tears shall reap in joy.—His tears, like showers in summer from a dark and lowering cloud, carry off the gloom which they first caused, portend a clearer and a cooler atmosphere, and are ultimately followed by the bright shining of the sun.

An unfavorable impression against religion is sometimes produced by the *constitutional gloom* of some of its genuine disciples. It should be recollected, that in these cases, religion does not cause the dejection, for this would have existed had there been no piety. All that can be said is, that it does not cure it, which is not to be expected, unless piety pretended to exert an influence over the physical nature of man.

The supposition that piety leads to melancholy is also founded, in part, on the *self-denying duties which the word of God enjoins.* Penitence, self-denial, renunciation of the world, willingness to take up the cross, and follow after Christ, are unquestionably required, and must be truly found in the genuine Christian. Hence, the worldling thinks it impossible, but that with such duties, should be associated the most sullen and miserable state of mind. Little does he imagine, that the pleasures which religion has to offer for those she requires us to abandon, are like the orb of day to the glow-worm of the hedge, or the meteor of the swamp; and that for every moment's self-denial she requires us to endure, she has a million ages of ineffable delight to bestow.

"And now upon the result of all, I suppose that to exhort men to be religious, is only in other words to exhort them to take their pleasure—a pleasure, high, rational, and angelical—a pleasure embased, with no appendant sting, no consequent loathing, no remorse or bitter farewells: but such an one, as being honey in the mouth, never turns to gall in the belly: a pleasure made for the soul and the soul for that; suitable to its spirituality and equal to its capacities: such an one as grows fresher upon enjoyment, and though continually fed upon, is never devoured: a pleasure that a man may call as properly his own, as his soul and his conscience; neither liable to accident, nor exposed to injury; it is the foretaste of heaven, and the earnest of eternity: in a word, it is such an one as being begun in grace, passes into glory, blessedness, and immortality; and those joys that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive."\*

\* This and the other quotations are from Dr. South's sermon on Prov. iii. 7, which is so striking that I could not avoid giving these extracts from it.

See also an excellent volume of sermons, by the Rev. H. F. Burner, on the pleasures of Religion.



## CHAPTER XI.

## ON THE ADVANTAGES OF EARLY PIETY.

A QUAIN but eminently spiritual poet of the last century has a poem, entitled, "Strife in Heaven:" a singular idea to attach to that region of untroubled repose. The design of the piece, however, is ingenious and interesting. A company of the redeemed above are represented as discussing, in a spirit of perfect love, the question, "which of them was most indebted to divine grace for his salvation?" Amongst these grateful and holy litigants, two appeared to have claims for the greatest weight of obligation to sovereign mercy, so nearly balanced, as to render it difficult to say which owed most.—One was a glorified spirit, converted in old age, after a long life of sin; the other was a saint redeemed in youth, and who spent as long a life in holiness. The one contended, that his forgiveness, after such a lengthened course of vice and destructive conduct, made him the greatest monument of saving love in heaven; "except," exclaimed the other, "myself; who, by divine grace, was prevented from that course of sin, and was enabled by religion to spend my years in holiness and usefulness." I think the happy throng must have confessed the justice of the younger seraph's claim; Omniscient wisdom from the throne must have confirmed their judgment; and in heaven it must have been decided, that *they* owe most to sovereign grace, who have been called by its power to the service of God in their youth.

Youth is a season which presents peculiar advantages for the *pursuit* of piety.

It is attended, in general, with more leisure, and less care, than any subsequent period of life. As yet, my children, you are not entangled in the concerns of business, nor the cares of a family. The ten thousand tumultuous anxieties of a father or a mother, a master or a mistress, do not yet fill your minds and exclude all other topics. Tell us, ye fathers, struggling with the difficulties of a precarious trade; and ye mothers, absorbed in the duties of a rising family; which, think ye, is the best time to begin the pursuit of eternal life? With tears they respond "Seize! O seize, young people, the hazy days of youth!"

Youth is a season of *greater susceptibility of mind* than any which follows it.

In the spring-time of nature, the soil is better prepared for the reception of the seed, and the energies of vegetation are more vigorous; so it is with the mind. In youth the heart is more easily impressed, the affections more readily moved, the imagination is more lively. You have an ardor and fervency most remote from the timid, hesitating caution of age, and eminently favorable to conversion. Disdaining all resistance, ambitious of great achievements, full of high resolves, and leaping over opposing obstacles, youth surveys, with sparkling eyes, the crown of its wishes, braces itself for action, and flies to the goal; whilst age, creeping fearfully along, afraid of every difficulty, discouraged by the least resistance, can scarcely be impelled to move. I know that these things of themselves are not sufficient to make you holy; but when grace sanctifies them, and directs them to proper objects, they must render your entrance on religion more easy, your progress more rapid, and your enjoyment more strong.

Youth are *less hardened in sin*, than persons of riper years.

The depravity of our nature grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength. Like a tree, it strikes its roots deeper, and takes a faster hold on the soil every year. You have principles

of corruption already in your hearts, my children, but they have not, by long indulgence, become so stiffened into habit, as they will be at some future time. Your prejudices and prepossessions are yet few and feeble. As yet the sentiments of modesty and propriety, and a regard to the opinion of others, would make you blush for acts of vice, and endeavor to conceal them from the world. In riper years you will assume a boldness in iniquity, disregard the censures of others, and cease to be restrained by them. Conscience has not yet been deeply corrupted; it still preserves something of its tremulous delicacy and nice sensibility; it still elevates its warning voice, and strongly remonstrates at your least deviation from the path of virtue; but in the aged sinner, weary of useless reproof, it is almost silent, or totally disregarded. We know that without divine grace, conversion, even in your case, cannot take place; but we know, at the same time, by observation, that divine grace very often follows in the order of nature.

Youth are *pre-eminently encouraged to seek the possession and influence of piety*.

There are many invitations, promises, and injunctions, specially addressed to them. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." Under the Jewish dispensation, God called for the *first fruits* of all things, intending, no doubt, to teach, amongst other lessons, his delight in the dedication of the first fruits of our life to his service. How pleased was the Redeemer with the hosannas of the children, and how deeply was he interested in the case of that hopeful youth who came to inquire of him the way to life. And does not the parable of the Prodigal Son teach us how welcome is the return of the young to the Father of Mercies? God chose David, the youngest son of the family; and set his love upon Jacob, while Esau, the elder, is passed by. He accepted the sacrifice of Abel, the younger brother, while that of Cain is rejected. Amongst all the disciples, John was the most beloved, and he was, at the same time, the youngest.

But still the principal design of this chapter is to set forth the advantages attendant on the *possession* of early piety.

1. Of these some relate to *others*. This will cause you to be a source of ineffable delight to your parents;\* and probably render you a blessing to your brothers and sisters. Piety in youth will render you a benefactor to your species, and a blessing to society. Instead of seducing others by a bad example, you will benefit them by the influence of a good one; instead of poisoning others by corrupt principles, you will scatter along your path the seed

\* In the memoirs of that truly apostolic missionary, the Rev. Henry Martyn, occurs the following anecdote, which most forcibly illustrates the subject of the influence of filial conduct upon parental and domestic comfort and respectability:

"Visited the hospital this day, and read the eleventh chapter of John to a poor man, in whose room at the workhouse, I was struck with the misery that presented itself. He was lying with his clothes and hat on, upon the bed, dying. His wife was cleaning the room, as if nothing was the matter; and upon the threshold was the daughter, about thirty years old, who had been delicious thirteen years." What a scene of wretchedness! What a miserable group! It is a picture from which the mind turns with the deepest emotions of distressful pity. But, Oh! the cause of this misery! "The dying man," continues Mr. Martyn, "was once a respectable innkeeper in the town; but the extravagance of a son brought him to poverty, and a daughter, who foresaw it, to insanity." What must be the feelings (except, indeed

of truth, piety, and morality; instead of drawing down the vengeance of God upon society by your crimes, you will bring down his blessing by your prayers. You will be a patriot of the most elevated and successful nature: and by your good conduct, and the support of all religious institutions, do more for the good of your country than fleets and armies can achieve.

2. Innumerable advantages will result from early piety, to yourself.

It will exert a friendly influence over your temporal interests.\* It will open *springs of consolation* all along your path through the vale of tears, whose waters, adapted to every condition, shall never fail. Religion, chosen in youth as your guide, companion, and friend, will attend you through all the journey of life; will go with you where you go, and dwell with you wherever you dwell: she will accompany you when with many tears you quit the parental roof, and go forth, a young adventurer, into the world. She will travel with you in the wilderness, or sail with you on the ocean; she will abide with you in a mansion, or inhabit with you the cottage: when every other friend forsakes you, she will cling to you the closer; smile, when every other face is covered with a frown; and put forth all her energies to comfort you in the time of your humbled fortunes: in seasons of perplexity, she will guide you to the fountain of light; when oppressed with care, will place you on the rock of ages; in the storms of affliction, will cast for you the anchor of hope; and in times of dreary desolation, will enable you, by faith, to see the land which is afar off, the land of promise and of rest.

Early piety is a distinguished honor.

If there be true honor in the universe, it is to be found in religion. Even the heathen were sensible of this; hence the Romans built the temples of virtue and honor close together, to teach that the way to honor was by virtue. Religion is the image of God in the soul of man. Can glory itself rise higher than this? What a distinction! to have *this* lustre put upon the character in youth. It was mentioned by Paul as a singular honor to the believing Jews, that they first trusted in Christ; and in referring to Andronicus and Junia, he mentions it to their praise that they were in Christ before him. To be a child of God, an heir of glory, a disciple of Christ, a warrior of the cross, a citizen of the New Jerusalem, from our youth up, adorns the brow with aramantine wreaths of fame. A person converted in youth, is like the sun rising on a summer's morning to shine through a long bright day; but a person converted late in life, is like the evening star, a lovely object of Christian contemplation, but not appearing till the day is closing, and then but for a little while.

Early piety will be of immense importance to you in the various relations of life in which you may stand.

If you are parents, it will dispose and enable you to train up your children and servants in the fear of God. It will prevent you from neglecting the im-

vice had turned his heart to stone) of the guilty author of this complicated misery, when he saw the consuming grief of his broken-hearted father, and heard the wild ramblings of his maniac sister, while conscience thundered in his ear, "Thou art the cause of this dreadful calamity!" How many broken hearts and insane minds has similar conduct produced! How many are at this moment bending to the grave, or shut up in the cells of a lunatic asylum, who, but for profligate children, might have been living in health, sanity, and respectability!

See the chapter on this subject.

mortal interests of those who are committed to your care. How many parents are accessory to the murder of their children's souls; blood-guiltiness rests upon their conscience, and the execrations of their own offspring will be upon them through eternity. In those cases where persons are redeemed late in life, what anguish is sometimes felt on seeing their children wandering in the broad road that leadeth to destruction; and on remembering that they were the means of leading them astray. "Oh, my children! my children!" they exclaim, "would God I had known religion earlier for your sakes. Why did I not seek the Lord in youth! Then I should have trained you up in the fear of God, and have been spared the agony of seeing you walking in the path of destruction; or, at least, have been spared the torturing reflection, that it was through my neglect you despised religion."

Early piety will be a guard to you against the temptations to which we are all exposed in this life.

Temptation to sin, like the wind, comes from every quarter in this world. In company, in solitude; at home, abroad; in God's house, and in our own; we are always open to attack. Business, pleasure, companions, all may become a snare. We never know when, or from what, or in what way to expect the assault. At one time we may be tempted to infidelity, at another to immorality; now to licentiousness, then to intemperance. Piety is the only effectual guard of our character. Luther tells us of a young believer who used to repel all temptations with this exclamation, "Begone, I am a Christian." My children, adopt the same character, and maintain it with the same constancy and success. When Pyrrhus tempted Fabricius the first day with an elephant, and the next with promises of honor, the Roman nobly replied, "I fear not thy force: I am too wise for thy fraud." Religion will enable you to say the same to every one who threatens or allures. Neglect piety in youth, and who shall say how low in the scale of vice and infamy you may be found in after life? Omit to take with you this shield, and your moral character may be destroyed, or receive a wound, the scar of which you may carry to the grave.

Early piety will thus leave you fewer sins to bewail in after life.

Amongst other things which the illustrious Beza gave thanks for to God in his last will and testament, was this: that he became a real Christian at the age of sixteen, by which he was prevented from the commission of many sins, which would otherwise have overtaken him, and rendered his life less happy. Every year's impenitence must cause many years' repentance. If you neglect religion in youth, God may give you up to the delusions of infidelity, or the practices of immorality; and during this unhappy season, of what remediless mischief may you be the occasion. How many companions may you lead astray by your crimes; who, admitting that you are afterwards reclaimed by grace, are not so easily led back by your virtues. Instances have occurred in which young men, during the days of their irreligion, have perpetrated the horrid crime of corrupting female virtue, and then abandoned the hapless victim of their passion. Cast off as a guilty, worthless thing, the injured partner of his sins has added iniquity to iniquity, and she, who but for her betrayer, might have lived a long and virtuous life, has sunk amidst disease, and want, and infamy, to an early and dishonored grave. God, in the mysteries of his grace, has in after years given repentance to the greater criminal of the two. But can he forget his crime? Oh, no. God has forgiven him, but never, never can he forgive himself. Not even the blood which has washed away the guilt from his conscience, can efface the history of it from his



page of memory; nor floods of tears deaden the impression which it has left upon the heart. He cannot restore the virtue he destroyed, nor refund the peace which with felon hand he stole from the bosom which was tranquil till it knew him; he cannot build up the character he demolished, much less can he rekindle the life which he extinguished, or call back from the regions of the damned the miserable ghost which he hurried to perdition. Ah! that ghost now haunts his imagination, and, as she exhibits the mingled agony, fury, revenge, and despair of a lost soul, seems to say, "Look at me, my destroyer!" For a while he can see nothing but her flames, and hear nothing but her groans.

Early religion would have saved him from all this. Late piety brings him salvation for another world, but it comes not soon enough to save him from remorse in this.

Early piety will procure for you, if you live so long, *the honor of an aged disciple.*

A person converted late in life, is a young disciple, though a gray-headed man. An aged hero, who has spent his days contending for the liberties of his country, or a philosopher, who has long employed himself in improving its science, or a philanthropist, who has become gray in relieving its wants, are venerable sights, but far inferior, if they are destitute of religion, to the aged Christian who has employed half a century in glorifying God, as well as doing good to man. An old disciple is honored in the church, and respected even in the world. His hoary head is lifted like a crown of glory among other and younger disciples, over whom his decaying form throws its venerated shade.—How rich is he in experience of all the ways of godliness. Like a decrepid warrior, he can talk of conflicts and of victories. Younger Christians gather round him to learn wisdom from his lips, and courage from his feats, and to show him tokens of respect. By his brethren in Christ he is regarded with veneration; his presence is always marked with every demonstration of respect, and his opinion is listened to with the profoundest deference. He is consulted in emergencies, and the fruits of his experience are gathered with eagerness. His virtues have been tried by time, the surest test of excellence, and they have passed with honor the ordeal. That suspicion and skepticism, which innumerable moral failures have produced in some minds, as to the reality of religion in general, and the sincerity of any of its professors, retire from the presence of such a man, convinced of the injustice of its surmises; and even the infidel and profane, bear a testimony to his worth, which his long tried consistency has extorted. "There, at least," say they, "is one good man, whose sincerity has been tried by the fluctuating circumstances and varying situations of half a century. His is no mushroom piety which springs up in a night, and perishes in a day. The suns of many summers, and the storms of many winters, have passed over it; and both adversity and prosperity have assailed, and demonstrated its stability. We begin after all, from that very character, to believe that there is more in religion than we have been apt to imagine."

Early piety, if persisted in, *prepares for a comfortable old age.* The condition of an old man without piety, is wretched indeed. He presents to the eye of Christian contemplation a melancholy spectacle. As to all the grand purposes of existence, he has passed through the world in vain. Life to him has been a lost adventure. Seventy years he has sojourned in the region of mercy, and is going out of it without salvation. Seventy years he has dwelt within reach of redemption, and yet is going to the lost souls in prison. If he is insensible to his case, he is going to ruin asleep; but if a little awakened,

how bitter are his reflections. If he looks back upon the past, he sees nothing but a wide and dreary waste, where the eye is relieved by no monuments of piety, but scared by memorials of a life of sin; if he looks at his present circumstances, he sees nothing but a mere wreck of himself, driving upon the rock of his destiny and destruction; but the future! oh, how can he look on that which presents to him death, for which he is not prepared; judgment, from which he can expect nothing but condemnation; heaven, which he has bartered for pleasures, the remembrance of which is now painful or insipid; hell, which he has merited, with its eternity of torments, by his iniquities. The ghosts of spent years, and departed joys, flit before him, and point to those regions of woe, whither sinful delights conduct the sensualist and voluptuary. Miserable old man! the winter of life is upon him, and he has nothing to cheer his cold and dreary spirit; nor any spring to look forward to: the *night* of existence has come on; not a star twinkles from heaven upon his path; nor will any morning dawn upon the gloom which enwraps him. Such is the old age of those who remember not God in their youth, and carry on their oblivion of religion, as such persons generally do, to the end of *his*.

But should any one be called at the eleventh hour, such a convert will be subject, at times, to the most painful doubts and apprehensions; he questions the reality of his religion; he fears that it is the result of circumstances, not of a divine change; he is afraid that, like a half-shipwrecked vessel, driven into port by the violence of the storm, rather than by the effort of the crew, he has been forced to religion more by the terrors produced by approaching death than the choice of his own will; he often concludes that he never forsook the world till he could no longer retain it; and that he renounced the enjoyments of earth only because from the decay of his body, from the feebleness of his mind, and the weakness of his fancy, he is unable to indulge in them.—These, and other similar fears, generally occasion, in persons converted in old age, a painful hesitancy concerning the security of their state; prevent them from going on their way rejoicing, and hang like a cloud upon the prospect of immortality.

How much more cheering and consolatory are the reflections of the aged Christian, who remembered his Creator in the days of his youth. He too has arrived at the wintry days of existence, but like the inhabitant of a well-stored mansion, he has a thousand comforts which enable him to hear the howling of the tempest without a fear, and to look on the dreariness of the scene unconscious of a want; and then, in addition to this, the days of everlasting spring approach. He, too, is overtaken by the evening; his shadow lengthens on the plain, but the heavens pour upon him the glory of God, while the world in which he trusted is a lamp unto his feet; and an eternal day is about to dawn upon his soul. In the past, he sees the long interval between the season of youth and the furrowed countenance of age, filled up in some good degree, with works of devotion, righteousness, and benevolence; where-by he has glorified God, benefited his species, and prepared a balm for his memory. No sins of youth fill his bones with pain, or his spirit with remorse. He has little doubt of his sincerity; for his life, though it affords him no ground of dependance for salvation, furnishes him with numerous evidences of the faith which justifies the soul, and purifies the heart. He forsook the world when most capable of enjoying it; he was not driven by violence to religion, but deliberately weighed anchor, and, with every sail set, steered for the haven of piety. He has resisted innumerable attacks upon his principles, and against every foe has held fast his inte-

grity. On the verge of life he can say, "I have kept the faith, I have fought a good fight, I have nearly finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life, which God the righteous Judge will bestow upon me."

Surely, surely my children, an old age thus placid and venerable, is an object worthy of your desire; surely these peaceful recollections, these sublime prospects, amidst the dreariness of age, are deserving your exertions.

Early piety will have a considerable influence on your eternal felicity.

In dwelling upon the two different and contrary states of heaven and hell, we are not to conceive of them as conditions of being, where all persons in the former will be equally happy, and all in the latter equally miserable. There are different degrees of glory in one, and different degrees of torment in the other. This is proved by Scripture, and accords with reason. Grace is glory in the bud; glory is grace in a state of fructification; and as in the natural world, so it is in the spiritual one, where there is little blossom, there cannot be much fruit. Life is the seedtime for eternity; what a man soweth, that shall he also reap, not only in kind, but degree. Late sowings, as well as scanty ones, are generally followed with short crops. The reward of the righteous is all of grace, but then that grace which rewards the righteous rather than the wicked, may, with equal consistency, reward righteousness according to its degrees. We cannot think that the reward of the dying thief, who was converted in the dark valley of the shadow of death, will be equal to that of Timothy or of Paul, who spent a long and laborious life in the service of Christ. Nor is it to be imagined, that the crown of the aged convert will be as bright or as heavy, as that of the Christian who is converted in youth, and continues, till a good old age, in a course of consistent piety.

But there is one consideration which should come home to the bosom of young people with overwhelming force: I mean, that *unless they become partakers of piety in early life, the probability is, that they will never partake of it at all.* Is it of consequence, that you should become pious at any time? then does all that consequence attach to the *present* time?—Let me sound this idea again and again in your ears, let me detain your attention upon the awful and alarming sentiment. The probability of your salvation becomes weaker and weaker as the years of youth roll by. It is less probable this year than the last, and will be less probable next year than this. I do not now argue upon the uncertainty of life, that I have considered before; I appeal to facts, which in reference to the sentiment I have now advanced, are of the most alarming aspect. Consider, only two individuals of the six hundred thousand, who left Egypt above the age of twenty years, enter Canaan. Of those who are converted at all, by far the greater part are brought to seek religion in their youth; and of the few who are reclaimed in adult, or old age, how rare a case is it, to find one who has been religiously educated. It is easy to observe, generally speaking, that sinners who have been brought under the means of grace, or under some new and impressive preaching, which they never enjoyed before, if they do not soon profit by their privileges, rarely profit by them at all. God's time of conversion seems to be, the morning of religious privilege. The churches mentioned in the New Testament, were chiefly made up of persons converted by the first efforts of the apostles. Hence, when these servants of the cross were unsuccessful in their early labors in a city, or province, they looked upon it as a bad omen, and as a strong indication that it would be useless to continue their ministra-

tions there; \* so that the usual order of divine grace is, for its showers to fall on what might be called morning sowings. The seasons of youthful years, or youthful means, are the usual times of conversion; and those who misimprove either of these, are in general found to neglect religion for ever after.

I am aware, that instances to the contrary are sometimes found; and therefore none who are inclined to seek God at any age should despair: yet they but rarely occur, and therefore let none presume. True repentance is never too late; but late repentance is seldom produced.

It is very probable, that some who shall read these pages, will deliberately and sincerely make up their mind to serve God at some future time, after they have a little longer enjoyed the world. Mistaken youth! Sinful young people! Let them consider what their intentions amount to; "I will go on sinning a little longer, and then I will repent. I will serve Satan, and the world, and sin, as long as I can, and when I am worn out in their service, or weary of it, I will turn to God and try the ways of religion. O Lord! the preserver of my days, spare my life a little longer to disobey thee, to insult thee, and then give me thy grace to assist me to turn from my wicked ways and live." What wickedness! What shocking impiety! What daring madness! Do they not tremble? Are they not terrified at this view of their own conduct? Can they live another day in this state of mind? Can they give their eyes to sleep with such a purpose in their bosom? Let them consider how just it is that God should reserve the dregs of his wrath for those who reserve only the dregs of their time for Him.

Now, now, my children is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." You know not what another day, hour, moment, may bring forth. Opportunity, mercy, salvation, heaven, eternal glory, are all upon the wing of the *present* hour; condemnation, hell, eternal torment and despair, may all be in the train of the *next*. That door of grace which is open to-day, may be shut to-morrow; that sceptre of mercy which is stretched out to-day, may be withdrawn to-morrow. Oh, the noble purposes that have withered, the sublime prospects that have failed, the millions of immortal souls that have perished by putting off the *present* season, for a more convenient time. "Soul opportunities," says an old author, "are more worth than a thousand worlds." And they are rapidly slipping by with the days of your youth.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION UPON THE TEMPORAL INTERESTS OF ITS PROFESSOR.

GODLINESS has the promise of the life that is to come; it conduces to glory, honor, immortality: this is its chief commendation. Revelation has drawn aside the veil which hangs over the unseen state, and urged you, my children, upon the great business of religion, by a contemplation of the dark world of hell, and of the splendors of the celestial city. It might seem, that after such an appeal, every other were useless, and that to speak of other advantages than eternal life, were only adding a drop to the ocean, a taper to the sun: but there are persons who are wrought upon more by present good, however small, than any future prospect of the greatest gain; who are more governed by illustrations borrowed from things seen and temporal, than by those which are derived from things

\* See Acts xiii. 46, 48; xxii. 18; xxviii. 23—28.



unseen and eternal. In *this* respect also, and on this ground, religion can plead its advantages, for 't has "the promise of the life that *now* is," as well as that which is to come. I do not assert, that religion will conduct all its followers to wealth, honor, and health. No. Still, however, it exerts a friendly influence on all the temporal interests of mankind, and protects them from many evils, to which, without it, they are exposed.

1. It exercises and improves the *understanding*.

From beginning to end, religion is an intellectual process. Whatever raises man above the dominion of the senses, and renders him independent of these, as sources of gratification, must have a salutary influence upon the mind. Now the objects which religion exhibits, are such as the mental faculties alone can converse with: and the moment a man begins to feel solicitude about spiritual things, he begins to experience a considerable elevation of character. And then the subjects of divine truth, are of the most sublime and lofty kind. They form the Alps in the world of mind. The existence and attributes of the great God; the system of Providence, embracing all worlds and all ages; the scheme of redemption, planned from eternity for the salvation of millions of rational creatures; the immortality of the soul; the solemnities of judgment; the everlasting states of the righteous and the wicked; these are the every-day topics of thought to a Christian. Can a man live in the daily contemplation of these vast ideas, and not feel an elevating influence upon his understanding? It will probably be said, that science will have the same effect. This is admitted in part. But how many are there to whom philosophical pursuits are utterly inaccessible. Besides this, it might be replied that nothing but religion will infallibly guard the soul from being debased by vicious indulgences.

Read the missionary records, and learn by these interesting details, what religion has done for the Negroes of the West Indies, the Hottentots of South Africa, the Esquimaux of Labrador, the fur-clad Greenlanders of the arctic regions, and the voluptuous cannibals of the South Sea Islands. It has raised them from savages into rational creatures; it has awakened their dormant understanding; sharpened their powers of perception; taught them the art of reasoning; and invested them with the power of eloquence.

But why do I go to distant countries, while our own furnishes illustrations so numerous, and so striking? How many persons are there, who were educated in our Sunday schools, and who are now filling stations of importance, credit, and usefulness, who, but for religion, would never have risen in the scale of society, or ascended above the lowest level of poverty. Education, it is true, gave the first impulse to their minds; but it was an impulse which would have soon spent its force, had it not been continued and increased by religion. It was this that gave the sober, serious, and reflective turn of mind which has led to such mental improvement: and they who, but for the power of godliness, would have been still earning their bread at the plough or the anvil, are filling the place of tradesmen or clerks; or are raised to the distinction of preaching with ability and success, the truths of salvation.\*

Religion guards the *health*.

\* As a proof of the influence which religion has in strengthening and elevating the powers, of even the most cultivated understanding, I may give the following quotation from the Life of the Rev. Henry Martyn, a book which I most emphatically recommend to the perusal of all young people, as one of the most interesting publications that modern times have produced.

I do not mean to say that the rose will ever bloom upon the countenance of piety, but I will affirm, that where it already displays its beauty and sheds its fragrance, religion will prevent those vices, which, like worms at the root of a flower, consume its strength, and shorten its existence. How many diseases are generated by sin. It is calculated that even in a time of war, there are more who perish by drunkenness and licentiousness, than by the sword. "Ye victims of voluptuousness, ye martyrs of concupiscence, who formerly tasted the pleasures of sin for a season, but now are beginning to feel the horrors of it for ever; you serve us for demonstration and example. Look at these trembling hands, that shaking head, those disjointed knees, that faltering resolution, that feeble memory, that worn out body all putrefaction; these are the dreadful rewards which vice bestows now, as pledges of what Satan will bestow presently, on those on whom he is preparing to exhaust his fury." Religion will prevent all this; that passion which wastes the strength as with a fever; that ambition which wears out the frame faster than hard labor; that malice which robs of sleep; that gambling which hurries a man backward and forward between the delirium of hope and the torture of fear; that gluttony which brings an apoplexy; that drunkenness which preys as a slow fire on the organs of life; that debauchery which corrupts the whole mass of the blood, and brings the infirmities of age on the days of youth: yes, religion keeps off all these vices and their consequences. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; it is a fountain of life to guard us from the snares of death." But of the drunkard and the fornicator it may be said, "His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which he down with him in the dust. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth; though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him."\*

3. Religion builds up and protects the *reputation*.

It prevents those sins which render a man dishonorable and infamous: it promotes all those virtues which raise and cherish esteem. How much is the liar, the extortioner and imposing tradesman, the unfaithful servant, the unkind husband, the cruel oppressive master, despised. Who respects the individual who is notoriously addicted to vice, and flagrantly neglectful of the lowest obligations of virtue? Whereas a man of consistent piety, who is known to be a real Christian, and whose Christianity renders him scrupulously true, honest and upright, such a man is universally esteemed. The wicked may laugh at his piety, but is he not the very man with whom they love to trade; in whose character they find sufficient vouchers for the propriety of his conduct; and in whose fidelity

"Since I have known God in a saving manner," he remarks, painting, poetry, and music, have had charms unknown to me before. I have received, what I suppose is a taste for them; for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful. O how religion secures the heightened enjoyment of those pleasures which keep so many from God, by their becoming a source of pride."

And it may be fairly argued that the sublimity of Milton's genius, was owing in no small degree to the influence of religion upon his mind. This is at once far more direct and obvious in its tendency, than any natural scenery, however bold and striking may be its features; since piety not only brings the mind into the region of sublime mental scenery but fixes the eye most intently upon it.

\* Job xx. 11—14.

they can repose unbounded confidence? This was remarkably exemplified in the instance of the missionary Schwartz, who labored to spread the gospel in the southern part of the Indian peninsula. Such was the repute in which this holy man was held by the native princes of Hindostan, that when Tippoo Saib was about to enter into a treaty with the Company, not being disposed to place much confidence in their agents, he exclaimed, "Send to me the missionary Schwartz, I will treat with him, for I can confide in *his* veracity."

How many persons has the want of religion brought to an untimely end! No man would ever have been exiled as a felon, or executed as a malefactor, if he had lived under the influence of piety. No jail would have been needed, no gallows erected, if all men were pious. Godliness may not indeed guard us from poverty, but it will certainly save us from infamy. It may not advance us to wealth, but it will assuredly raise us to respectability.

#### 4. Religion promotes *our secular interests*.

I do not pretend that piety bears into the church the cornucopia of worldly wealth, to pour down showers of gold on all who court her smiles and bend to her sway; but still there is a striking tendency in her influence, to improve our worldly circumstances.

It certainly prevents *those vices which tend to poverty*. Penury is often the effect of vice. How many have hurled themselves and their families from the pinnacles of prosperity to the depths of adversity, by a course of wicked and profligate extravagance. Multitudes have spent all their substance, like the prodigal son, upon harlots and riotous living. Pride has ruined thousands and indolence its tens of thousands. It is a quaint observation of an old writer, but a very true one, that one vice costs more to keep it than two children." Religion is the most economical, and sin the most expensive thing in the world. How much do the drunkard, debauchee, sabbath-breaker, and frequenter of theatres, pay for their sinful gratifications. What is spent in this kingdom every year in the grosser sensual indulgences, would pay the interest of the national debt. Piety would save all this to the kingdom.

And then it not only prevents the vices which tend to poverty, but it *enjoins and cherishes the virtues which lead to prosperity*. It makes a man industrious; and is not this the way to wealth? It renders him sober, and does not sobriety tend to advance our fortune? It enforces a right improvement of time, and surely this is advantageous to every one. It prescribes frugality, which tends to increase. If a young man is in the service of another, piety, by causing him to speak the truth, and adhere to the principles of honesty, renders him trust-worthy and confidential. Innumerable are the cases in which persons, who set out on the journey of life without property and without patronage, have, by dint of those virtues which religion enjoins, risen to respectability and affluence. They were first probably in a state of servitude, where, by their steadiness and good conduct, they so attached themselves to their employers, as to become in their estimation, almost essential to the future success of the business; and the result has been, a share, and, in some cases, the whole of the trade, which they had contributed so materially to establish.

A friend of mine was once walking in the neighborhood of a large manufacturing town on a very cold winter's morning, when he overtook a plain man, decently clad, and wrapped in a comfortable great coat. After the usual salutations, my friend said to the stranger, "I am glad to see you with such a good warm covering this cold morning." "It was

not always thus," the man replied. "I was once a poor miserable creature, and had neither good clothes nor good victuals; now I have both, and a hundred pounds in the bank." "What produced this favorable change?" continued my friend. "Religion, Sir. I am a good workman, and, as is too commonly the case with such men, spent half my time, and all my wages nearly, at the public house. I was of course always poor, and always wretched. By God's direction I was led to hear the Methodists, when by divine grace, the word reached my heart. I repented of my sins, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things passed away, and all things became new. Religion made me industrious and sober; nothing now went for sin; and the result is, that I am comfortable, and comparatively rich."

Here then, is a proof and an illustration, that godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Nor are these proofs uncommon. Many persons, now living in circumstances of high respectability, are willing to ascribe all they possess here, as well as all they hope for hereafter, to the influence of religion.

All this is seen in the case of individuals: but if the subject be carried out to society at large, it will appear still more striking.

What but religion can raise men from a savage to a civilized state? What else could have achieved the wonders which have been wrought in Africa, in Otaheite; and taught the rudest barbarians to till the ground, to learn trades, to clothe themselves in decent apparel, to read, to cast accounts, to print books, to frame laws?

Godliness alone can expel from society the practice of cruelty, and introduce the reign and prevalence of mercy. The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Rome and Greece, in the zenith of their glory, had neither a hospital for the sick, nor an asylum for the poor: they treated their enemies with the most insolent cruelty; practised the most rigorous slavery; instituted games, in which myriads of human beings were torn to pieces in fighting with wild beasts. What a blessing has Christianity been to the world, even in relation to its present comforts. It has suppressed polygamy, put a stop to the sale of children by their parents, and the abandonment and murder of aged parents by their children; it has rescued women from their abominable degradation by the other sex, and raised them to their just rank in society; it has sanctified the bond of marriage, checked the licentiousness of divorce; it has in a great measure destroyed slavery, mitigated the terrors of war, given a new sanction to treaties, introduced milder laws, and more equitable governments; it has taught lenity to enemies, and hospitality to strangers; it has made a legal provision for the poor; formed institutions for instructing the ignorant; purified the stream of justice, erected the throne of mercy. "These, O Jesus, are the triumphs and the trophies of thy gospel, and which of thine enemies, Paganism, Islamism, or Infidelity, *has* done, or *could* do, the like?"

Even the avowed and inveterate opponents of the gospel, have been reluctantly compelled to acknowledge, in this view, its excellence. Voltaire says expressly, "that religion is necessary in every community; the laws are a curb upon open crimes, and religion on those that are private." "No religion," says Bolingbroke, "ever appeared in the world, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind, as the Christian. The gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, benevolence, and universal charity. Supposing



Christianity to be a human invention it is the most amiable and useful invention that ever was imposed upon mankind for their good." Hume acknowledges, that "disbelief in futurity, loosens in a great measure the ties of morality, and may be supposed, for that reason, pernicious to the peace of civil society." Rousseau confesses, "that if all were perfect Christians, individuals would do their duty, the people would be obedient to the laws, the chiefs just, the magistrates incorrupt, the soldiers would despise death, and there would be neither vanity nor luxury in such a state." Gibbon admits, "that the gospel discouraged suicide, advanced erudition, checked oppression, promoted the manumission of slaves, and softened the ferocity of barbarous nations; that fierce nations received at the same time lessons of faith and humanity, and that even in the most corrupt state of Christianity, the barbarians learnt justice from the law, and mercy from the gospel.\*"

And yet with such concessions, and after having paid such a tribute of praise to the excellence of Christianity, these miserable men have been so vile and perverse as to conspire for her destruction.

Thus has it been most demonstrably proved that godliness exerts a powerful and favorable influence over the temporal interests of mankind. Neglect it, my children, and you know not what awaits you either in this world or in that which is to come. Decent, and sober, and steady, although not pious, you may fancy yourselves far enough removed from the probability of that wretchedness which vice brings with it. But, ah! in some unguarded moment, temptation may be successful to lead you astray; one vice makes way for another; and the dreadful progress described in the chapter on the deceitfulness of the heart, may be realized by you. Neglect religion, and you will *certainly* be ruined for the world to come, and *may* be for the life that now is. Vice certainly brings hell in its train, and oftentimes a dreadful earnest of its future torments, in present poverty, disease and misery.

I reflect with unutterable grief, as I now write, upon many young men, who were entering life with the greatest advantages and the brightest prospects, whom, to use a common expression, fortune favored with her brightest smiles; but alas! they would not be happy and respectable, for taking to the ways of sin, they dashed all the hopes of their friends, and wantonly threw away the opportunities which a kind providence had put within their reach. They first went to the theatre, then to the brothel, then to the tavern. They became dissipated, extravagant, idle. Unhappy youth! I know what they might have been: respectable tradesmen, prosperous merchants, honorable members of society: I know what they are: bloated rakes, discarded partners, uncertificated bankrupts, miserable vagrants, a burthen to their friends, a nuisance to the community, and a torment to themselves.

Seek religion then; for, as Solomon says in a passage quoted in the former chapter, "She is more precious than rubies: and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her; Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand, riches and honor. Exalt her and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her."

\* See an interesting work, by Dr. Ryan, entitled, "The History of the Effects of Religion on Mankind, in countries Ancient and Modern, Barbarous and Civilized." I very particularly recommend the perusal of this volume to all young persons who can procure it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ON THE CHOICE OF COMPANIONS.

MAN was made for society, and society is thought to be essential to his happiness. Adam did but half enjoy the lovely and untainted scenes of Eden, while there was no rational companion, to whom he could impart the raptures of his soul, and Paradise was incomplete till God gave him a friend.—How much more might it be expected, that now, when the human bosom is bereft of its innocence, man should look out of himself for happiness, and endeavor to find it in society. Young people especially, are anxious to form associations of this kind, and are in imminent danger of choosing companions that will do them no good. The design of the present chapter is to put you, my children, on your guard against this evil, and to assist you in the selection of those friends with whom you take daily counsel. This subject has been already adverted to, but it is of sufficient importance to occupy a separate chapter.

1. It becomes you very seriously to reflect on the influence which your companions, of whatever kind they are, will certainly have in the formation of your character.

"We are all," says Mr. Locke, "a kind of camellions, that take a tincture from the objects which surround us." A still wiser man has told us, that "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Hence he cautions us; "make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." These admonitions are founded on the general principle, that the example of our companions will exert a plastic influence in the formation of our own character, slow and silent, perhaps, but irresistible and successful: and this influence will be in proportion to the love and esteem we cherish for them. All nations and all ages have confessed the truth of the sentiment. The example of a beloved companion is omnipotent, more especially if he be a sinful one, because a bad model finds in the depravity of our nature something that prepares it to receive the impression. One evil companion will undo in a month, all that parents and teachers have been laboring for years to accomplish. Here then pause, and consider that the character, of your associates will in all probability, be your own. If you do not *carry* to them a similarity of taste, you will be sure to *acquire* it; "for how can two walk together except they be agreed?"

2. Let me now set before you the dangers to be apprehended from *bad* company.

By bad company I mean all those who are destitute of the fear of God; not only the infidel, the profligate, the profane, but those who are living in *the visible neglect of religion*. Now these are not fit companions for you. They may be respectable and genteel as to their rank in life; they may be graceful and insinuating in their manners; they may be persons of fine taste, and cultivated understandings; of facetious humor, and polished wit; but these things, if connected with irreligious habits, only make them the more alarmingly and successfully dangerous. They are like the fair speech, and lovely form, and glowing colors, which the serpent assumed when he attacked and destroyed the innocence of Eve. Look through these meretricious ornaments, pierce this dazzling exterior, and recognize the substance, the fang, and the venom of the wily foe. The more external accomplishments any one has, if he be without the fear of God, the greater is his power to do mischief; and remember, that when you have listened to his wiles, and feel the

sharpness of his tooth, and the deadly agony of his venom, it will be no compensation nor consolation that you have looked on his many-tinted skin, and have been ruined by the fascination of his charms. The companions you are to avoid then, are those who are obviously living without the fear of God.

Consider the many dangers arising from such associates. You will soon outlive all sense of serious piety, and lose all the impressions you might have received from a religious education. These you cannot hope to preserve; you might as soon expect to guard the impressions you had traced with your finger on the sand from the tide of the Atlantic ocean. Even they whose religious character has been formed for years, find it hard to preserve the spirituality of their mind in irreligious company. "Throw a blazing firebrand into snow or rain," says Bolton, "and its brightness and heat will be quickly extinguished; so let the liveliest Christian plunge himself into sinful company, and he will soon find the warmth of his zeal abated, and the tenderness of his conscience injured." How then can you expect to maintain a sense of religion, whose habits are scarcely formed, and whose character has yet so much of the tenderness and suppleness of youth? Do consider your proneness to imitate: your dread of singularity; your love of praise; your morbid sense of shame. Can you bear the sneer, the jest, the broad, loud laugh? With none to defend you, none to join you in your reverence for piety, what are you to do single and alone?

In such company you lay yourselves open to temptation, and will probably be drawn into a great deal of guilt. In private and alone, the force of temptation and the power of depravity are very great, but how much greater when aided by the example of intimate friends. As united fires burn the fiercer, and the concentrated virus of many persons thrown into the same room infected with the plague, renders the disease more malignant, so a sinful community improves and grows in impiety, and every member joins his brother's pollution to his own.

Nothing is so contagious as bad morals. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Multitudes have committed those sins without scruple in society, which they could not have contemplated alone without horror. It is difficult indeed to wade against the torrent of evil example; and in general, whatever is done by the party, must be done by every individual of which it is composed.

In such company you will throw yourselves out of the way of repentance and reformation. The little relish you once had for devotional exercises will soon be lost. Your Bible will fall into desuetude, the house of God will be neglected, and pious friends carefully shunned. Should an occasional revival of your serious feelings take place under a sermon, or the remonstrances of a friend, they will be immediately lulled again to repose, or banished from your bosom by the presence and conversation of an irreligious companion.

In many cases evil society has destroyed for ever even the temporal interests of those who have frequented it. Habits of dissipation, folly, and extravagance have been acquired; character has been ruined, business neglected, poverty and misery entailed. But if this should not ensue, the influence of evil association will go to ruin your souls, and sink you to perdition. A companion of fools shall be destroyed; their path is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. Yes; if you connect yourselves with them, they will drag you into the vortex of their own ruin, as they sink in the gulf of perdition. Is there the companion on earth whose society you will seek or retain at this dread-

ful hazard? Is there one, for the sake of whose friendship you will be willing to walk with him to the bottomless pit? What though you could have the society of the first poets, philosophers, wits, and fashionables of the age, and yet were to lose your own souls, what would this profit you! Will it soothe the agonies of your spirit in those regions of horrible despair, to remember what you enjoyed in the company of your gay companions on earth? Alas! alas! all that rendered your intercourse on earth delightful, will then come to a final end. There will be no opportunities granted you to gratify your sensual desires together; no delicious food, no intoxicating liquors; there are no amusing tales, no merry songs there; no feast of reason nor the flow of soul there; no consolations of wit will enliven the gloom of hell; no gay fancy will brighten the darkness of eternal despair, no sallies of humor shall illumine the blackness of everlasting night; "but there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched."

What mind but His, who comprehends the universe in his survey, can conceive the multitudes that have been ruined for both worlds by the influence of bad company. Their names have been recorded on every roll of infamy, and found in every memorial of guilt and wretchedness. The records of the workhouse and the hospital; of the jails and the hulks; or the gallows and the dissecting-room, would declare the mischief; and could we look into the prison of lost souls, a crowd of miserable ghosts would meet our eye, who seem to utter in groans of despair, this sad confession, "We are the wretched victims of evil associations."

In the large and populous town where Providence has fixed my lot, I have had an extensive sphere of observation; and I give it as my decided conviction and deliberate opinion, *that improper associates are the most successful means which are employed by Satan for the ruin of men's souls.*

The advice then which I offer is this:

1. Be not over anxious about society. Do not take up the opinion that *all* happiness centres in a friend. Many of you are blessed with a happy home, and an agreeable circle round your own fireside.\* Here seek your companions, in your parents your brothers, and sisters.
2. Determine to have no companion rather than an improper one. The one case is but a privation of what is pleasant, the other is the possession of a positive evil.
3. Maintain a dignified but not proud reserve. Do not be too frank and ingenuous. Be cautious of too hastily attaching yourselves as friends to

\* Let me here address a word to parents. As you would not drive your children to seek improper companions abroad, seek to make them contented and happy at home. Render their own house pleasant to them, and they will rarely feel a desire to seek happiness in the houses of others. Be you their companions and friends, and they will not be anxious to seek foreign ones. As far as circumstances will admit, be much at home yourselves, and that will keep your children there. Spend what evenings you can in the bosom of your family. Point out to your children what books to peruse. Read *with* them and *to* them. Converse with them in a free and engaging manner. Do not be household tyrants; driving your children from your presence by severity, petulance, and ill humor; but conduct yourselves with that affection and affability which shall render your return welcome to your family, and draw your children in a little crowd of smiling faces round you the moment you enter the room.



others, or them to you. Be polite and kind to all, but communicative and familiar with few. Keep your hearts in abeyance, till your judgment has most carefully examined the characters of those who wish to be admitted to the circle of your acquaintance. Neither run nor jump into friendships, but walk towards them slowly and cautiously.

4. Always consult your parents about your companions, and be guided by their opinions. They have your interests at heart, and see further than you can.

5. Cultivate a taste for reading and mental improvement; this will render you independent of living society. Books will always furnish you with intelligent, useful, and elegant friends. No one can be dull who has access to the works of illustrious authors, and has a taste for reading. And after all, there are comparatively few whose society will so richly reward us as this silent converse with the mighty dead.

6. Choose none for your intimate companions but those who are decidedly pious, or persons of very high moral worth. A scrupulous regard to all the duties of morality; a high reverence for the Scriptures; a belief in their essential doctrines; a constant attendance on the means of grace, are the *lowest* qualifications which you should require in the character of an intimate friend.

Perhaps I shall be asked one or two questions on this subject, to which an answer ought to be returned. "If," say you, "I have formed an acquaintance with a young friend before I had any serious impressions upon my mind, ought I now to quit his society, if he still remains destitute of any visible regard to religion?" First try, by every effort which affection can dictate, and prudence direct, to impress his mind with a sense of religion; if, after a while, your exertions should be unavailing, candidly tell him that, as you have taken different views of things, and acquired different tastes to what you formerly possessed, and that as you have failed to bring him to your way of living, and can no longer accommodate your pursuits to his, conscience demands of you a separation from his society. Sir Matthew Hale, one of the most upright and able judges that ever sat upon the bench, was nearly ruined by his dissolute companions. When young, he had been very studious and sober; but the players happening to come to the town where he was studying, he became a witness of their performance, by which he was so captivated, that his mind lost its relish for study, and he addicted himself to dissipated company. When in the midst of his associates one day, it pleased God to visit one of them with sudden death. Sir Matthew was struck with horror and remorse. He retired and prayed, first for his friend, that if the vital spark were not fled, he might be restored; and then for himself, that he might never more be found in such places and company as would render him unfit to meet death.—From that day he quitted all his wicked companions, walked no more in the way of sinners, but devoted himself to piety and literature.

I shall be asked again probably, "What am I to do, if I can find in my situation no individual of my own rank and circumstances in life, who is a partaker of true piety; ought I, in this case, to associate with those who are much below me, and who cannot be my companions in any thing but piety?" In reply to this, I observe, that it is *character* which constitutes respectability, and not the adventitious circumstances of fortune or rank: and to conduct ourselves in any degree as if we were ashamed of the followers of Christ, because they are poor, is an offence against our divine Lord. To forsake prayer meetings, benevolent institutions, Sunday schools, or places where the gospel is preached, merely be-

cause we find none there of sufficient fortune to associate with us; to treat our poorer brethren with cold neglect and haughty distance; to refuse to be seen speaking *with* them, and *to* them, as if they were beneath us; this is most manifestly wrong; for it is carrying the distinctions of the world into the church. Still, however, as religion was never intended to level these distinctions, it might not be advisable to choose *bosom companions* from those who are far below us in worldly circumstances. Some inconvenience would arise from the practice, and it would occasion, in many cases, the ways of godliness to be spoken ill of.

Young persons of good habits should take great heed that they do not, by insensible degrees, become dangerous characters to each other. That social turn of mind, which is natural to men, and especially to young persons, may perhaps lead them to form themselves into little societies, particularly at the festive season of the year, to spend their evenings together. But let me entreat you to be cautious *how* you spend them. If your games and your cups take up your time till you entrench on the night, and perhaps on the morning too, you will quickly corrupt each other. Farewell then to prayer, and every other religious exercise in secret. Farewell then to all my pleasing hopes of you, and to those hopes which your pious parents have entertained. You will then become examples and instances of all the evils I have so largely described. Plead not that these things are lawful in themselves; so are most of those in a certain degree which, by their abuse, prove destructive to men's souls and bodies. If you meet, let it be for rational and Christian conversation; and let prayer and other devotions have their frequent place among you; and if you say or think that a mixture of these will spoil the company, it is high time for you to stop your career, and call yourselves to an account; for it seems by such a thought that you are lovers of pleasure much more than lovers of God. Some of those things may appear to have a tincture of severity, but consider whether I could have proved myself faithful to you, and to him in whose name I speak, if I had omitted the caution I have now been giving you. I shall only add that, had I loved you less tenderly, I should have warned you more coldly of this dangerous and deadly snare.\*

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ON BOOKS.

THE invention of the art of printing forms an era in the history of mankind, next in importance to the promulgation of the law, and the publication of the gospel. Until this splendid gift was bestowed upon man, books, which were all in manuscript, were circulated within a comparatively narrow sphere, and knowledge was in the possession of only a privileged few. This invaluable art, however, rendered the fountains of information accessible to all, and gave opportunity to the poorest of our race, to slake their mental thirst at the deepest and purest streams of truth. There was a time when ignorance was rather a misfortune than a reproach; and when, indeed, a craving after information would, with many, have been rather a calamity than a benefit, since the means of satisfying the appetite were beyond their reach. The state of things is altered now, and almost a whole circle of science may be purchased for a few shillings. Education is also much

\* See Dr. Doddridge's sermon, entitled "A Dissuasive from Keeping Bad Company."

improved and extended. Under these circumstances, ignorance is a deep reproach; and a young person who can suffer days and weeks to pass without taking up a book, is a pitiable spectacle of doltish inanity. Cultivate, then, my children, a taste for reading; and in order to this, there must be a thirst after information. "Knowledge," says Lord Bacon, "is power;" and if it were not power, it is pleasure. It gives us weight of character, and procures for us respect. It enables us to form an opinion with correctness, to state it with clearness, to offer it with confidence, and to enforce it with argument. It enlarges the sphere of our usefulness, by raising the degree of our influence. Other things being equal, that man will be the most useful who has the greatest measure of information. Here I shall offer some directions for your guidance in the selection of books. Books may be divided into two classes.

First, such as relate to religion.

Of these, the BIBLE of course occupies the supreme place, an elevation exclusively its own. It is, as its title signifies, THE BOOK;—the standard of all right sentiments; the judge of all other works. Sir William Jones, that prodigy of learning, wrote on the fly-leaf of his Bible these remarks: "I have carefully and regularly perused these holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written." Salmatius, the learned antagonist of Milton, said on his death-bed, "that were he to begin life again, he would spend much of his time in reading David's psalms and Paul's epistles." Whatever books you neglect, neglect not the Bible. Whatever other books you read, read this. Let not a day pass without perusing some portion of holy writ. Read it devoutly; not from curiosity, nor with a view to controversy; but to be made wise unto salvation. Read it with much prayer. Read it with a determination to follow its guidance wheresoever it leads.\*

In addition to the Bible, there are many unispersed religious books which I recommend. In the class of *biography*, Hunter's *Scripture Characters* is a most fascinating production. Brook's *Lives of the Puritans*, Gilpin's *Lives of the Reformers*, Cox's *Life of Melancthon*, are all useful and interesting. Mr. Williams' *Life and Diary* will show you how the tradesman may be united with the Christian, and how a man may be busy for both worlds. The *Life of Pearce*, by Fuller, is an excellent work. Martyn's *Memoirs* is the most interesting piece of biography published in modern times. Durant's *Life and Remains of his Son* are singularly instructive.

Should you wish to read on *doctrinal theology*, I strongly recommend Dwight's system. On the *evidences of Christianity*, Bishop Watson's *Apology*, in reply to Paine; likewise, Bogue's *Essay*, Chalmers' *Historical Evidences*, the masterly work of Paley, and Campbell on *Miracles*, a work which meets the subtleties of Hume.

On *church history*, I recommend Burner's *History of the Reformation*; Campbell, for his admirable description of the rise, progress, and spirit of popery; Mosheim, for his account of the errors and corruptions of the Church; and Milner, for his anxiety to trace true piety, wherever it is to be found, amidst the prevailing ignorance and vice of the times. He is, however, too credulous, and not so impartial in

his treatment of the questions which bear on dissent, as the dignity and candor of an historian require. Jones's *History of the Waldenses* is a very interesting work.

Secondly, the other division of books includes all the varied classes, which relate to the affairs of this life.

Enjoying, as Britons, the advantages of a political constitution, which is the work of ages, and the admiration of the world, you should acquaint yourselves with its theory, and for this purpose may read Custance's short work, De Lolme's more elaborate and philosophical production, and the first volume of Blackstone's *Commentaries*, together, with a more modern work of Lord John Russell's.

Young men should acquaint themselves with the principles of *trade and commerce*, and of course should be acquainted with Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations."

*History* is a class of reading in which you ought to be at home; and as Britons, it would be to your deep disgrace to be ignorant of the details of your *own country*. In this department you ought not to be satisfied with mere facts, and names, and dates, but should read with an eye which discriminates and marks the changes which events introduce into the manners, laws, liberties, and governments of nations. History is something more than a mere chronicle of facts; and our knowledge of its details should be such as enables us to trace the progress of society, and the march of improvement. The history of Goldsmith should prepare you for the larger and popular work of Hume. The beautiful simplicity of Hume's composition, together with his philosophical mode of analyzing character, and tracing events, renders his work peculiarly fascinating; but unhappily, Hume was a confirmed infidel, and must be read with a mind ever upon its guard against the poison which he has infused into his narrative; and his views on the great question of civil liberty were not the most liberal. When you read this author, remember that although you are drinking a pleasant draught from a goblet of burnished gold, there is poison in the cup: happily, the deleterious infusion floats upon the surface, and may be therefore easily detected. An English history, in which there shall be the most sacred regard to the principles of pure morality, evangelical religion, and rational liberty, is still a desideratum in the literature of our country.\*

The ancient history of Rollin, eloquent, pure, and moral, should be read by every young person. Goldsmith's *Greece* should prepare for the masterly work of Mitford; and his *Rome*, for the gorgeous production of Gibbon. Unhappily, the same remark will apply to this latter writer, as to his contemporary Hume: he was an infidel, though in a more covert way than the Scotch historian. If you have

\* Some interesting and valuable books, entitled "Studies in History," have been published by the Rev. S. Morrel, theological tutor in the dissenting academy at Wymondley. His moral reflections are rather too long, and too much detached from the history. Hume has so incorporated his infidelity with his history, that it is impossible to read the one without the other. In this way a moral and religious history should be written. To use a simile borrowed from weaving, the religion and the narrative should, like the warp and the woof, be wrought into each other. Where they are entirely detached, young people find the thread of the history too much broken, and leave the comment to follow the text. Mr. Lingard, a Roman Catholic author, is now publishing a very well written history of England, in which his views and feelings, as a Catholic, are, however, sufficiently prominent.

\* I recommend to the young a diligent and serious perusal of Bickersteth's *Help to the reading of the Scriptures*; a very valuable treatise.



leisure and inclination to peruse Roman history, Crevier, who was a pupil of Rollin, has supplied the means, in his "Lives of the Emperors;" and Hooke, also, in his Roman History, which is carried down to the death of Octavius. Robertson's historical works are eminently entitled to attention, especially his "Charles the Fifth," the introductory volume of which contains a view of the progress of society in Europe, from the subversion of the Roman empire to the beginning of the sixteenth century; and also presents a masterly survey of the gradations by which the social institutions of antiquity have passed through the barbarism of the dark ages, into all that characterizes the state of modern Europe. Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times, ought to be perused as the work of an author who wrote the narrative of events which he witnessed, whose veracity can be trusted, if not his discrimination.

In the department of *English composition*, Addison and Johnson, though moral writers, in the usual acceptation of the term, are not always correct in their principles, if indeed the New Testament is the standard of moral sentiments. It is desirable to cultivate a good taste, and an elegant style of composition: and for this purpose, the productions of these two celebrated writers may be read, together with Burke on the Sublime, Alison on Taste, Blair's Lectures, and Campbell on Rhetoric.

*Poetry* is a bewitching, and if not of a strictly moral character, a dangerous species of writing. I by no means condemn it, for this would betray a Gothic destitution of taste, as well as an ignorance of some of the first principles of our nature. The ear is tuned to enjoy the melody of numbers, and the imagination formed to delight in the creations of fancy. But still it must be recollected, that the imagination is amongst the inferior faculties of mind, and that the gratification of the senses is amongst the lowest ends of a rational existence: only a *limited* perusal of poetry is therefore to be allowed; such an indulgence in this mental luxury and recreation, as will not unfit the mind, or deprive it of opportunity for severer and more useful pursuits. We should use poetry as we do those pleasing objects of nature, from which it derives its most lovely images; not as the regions of our constant abode, but as the scenes of our occasional resort. Although the present age can boast the noble productions of such men as Scott, Southey, Campbell, and Wordsworth, whose poems every person of real taste will read, yet I recommend the more *habitual* perusal of Spencer and Milton among the ancients, and Cowper and Montgomery among the moderns: the two first for their genius, and the others for their piety.\*

The whole wide range of *Natural History* and *Experimental Philosophy*, presents a scene of inter-

esting research, through which authors of the first respectability stand always ready to conduct you, unfolding at every step some new proof of the existence, and some fresh display of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great First Cause. The sublime wonders of astronomy elevate the mind, and throw open an almost infinite field of contemplation and astonishment. Chymistry, by its combinations, affinities, and repulsions; by its principles as a theory, and the unlimited practical uses of these principles, is an endless career of pleasing and useful study. Optics, pneumatics, electricity, with all their attendant sciences, have been treated of by writers, whose productions assist us to explore the wonderful works of God: while botany shows that the weed we trample under our feet, no less than the mighty orb which rolls through illimitable space, obeys the laws, assumes the place, and accommodates itself to the order appointed by its Creator.

As to that class of books denominated *novels*, I join with every other moral and religious writer in condemning, as the vilest trash, the greater part of the productions, which, under this name, have carried a turbid stream of vice over the morals of mankind. They corrupt the taste, pollute the heart, debase the mind, immortalize the conduct. They throw prostrate the understanding, sensualize the affections, enervate the will, and bring all the high faculties of the soul into subjection to an imagination which they have first made wild, insane, and uncontrollable. They furnish no ideas, and generate a morbid, sickly sentimentalism, instead of a just and lovely sensibility. A wise man should despise them, and a good man should abhor them.—Of late years they have, it is true, undergone a considerable reformation. The present EXTRAORDINARY FAVORITE of the literary world, has indeed displaced, and sent into oblivion, a thousand miserable scribblers of love stories, who still however fling back at him, as they retire, the ancient taunt, "Art thou too become as one of us?" His works discover prodigious talent, astonishing information, and a power of delineating character truly wonderful. But what is their merit beyond a power to amuse? Who ever wrote so much for so little real usefulness?—They are still, in part, works of fiction, and in measure, exert the same unfriendly influence on the public mind and taste as other works of fiction do.

As to *religious novels*, they are rarely worth your attention. I should be sorry to see this species of writing become the *general* reading of the religious public. Symptoms of a craving appetite for this species of mental food have been very apparent of late. These are far more likely to lead young persons of pious education to read other kinds of novels, than they are to attract the readers of the latter to pious tales. They have already, in many cases,

\* As for Byron, possessing, as he does, the very soul of poetry, beyond all his contemporaries, his exquisite pathos, and peerless beauty can make no atonement for his vices, and should have no power to reconcile us to his works. He is indeed, as he has been styled, the master of a Satanic school: infidelity and immorality are the lessons which all his pages teach; and nearly all his characters embody and enforce. Never before did these dispositions receive such patronage from the poetic muse. Never was genius seen more closely allied to vice, than in the productions of this popular, but dangerous writer. His works are enough to corrupt the morals of a nation, and seem indeed, to have been written for this dreadful purpose. He stands like a volcano in the world of letters, grand and majestic, dark, lowering, and fiery; while every new work is but another eruption of lava upon the interests beneath. He seems to have been stirred up by the evil spirit to

attempt, by his fascinating poems, that mischief, which the wit of Voltaire, the subtleties of Hume, and the popular ribaldries of Paine, had, in vain, endeavored to achieve.

At length the indignation of heaven seems to have been roused, and to have scorched with its lightning the wings of his lofty, but impious genius; inasmuch as his later productions evince a singular destitution of that talent by which the earlier effusions of his muse were characterized. One can scarcely suppose it possible, that even *he* could read the last cantos of his most licentious work, without secretly exclaiming, under a consciousness of their inferiority, "How am I fallen!"

If young people would not be cursed by the infidelity and immorality which lurk in his pages, let them beware how they touch his volumes, as much as they would to embrace a beautiful form infected with the plague.

formed a taste for works of fiction, which is gratifying itself with far more exceptionable productions. They have become the harbingers in some families of works which, till *they* entered, would have been forbidden to pass the threshold.

It is very evident that the taste of the present age is strongly inclined for works of fiction. I am not unacquainted with the arguments by which such productions are justified, nor am I by any means prepared to pronounce a sweeping sentence of condemnation upon them. Genius is elicited and cherished by writing them; and taste is formed, corrected, and gratified by reading them. Provided they are totally free from all unscriptural sentiments and anti-christian tendency, they form a recreation for the mind, and keep it from amusements of a worse character. I am also aware that they may be, and have been, made the vehicle of much instruction. Johnson tells us that this, amongst many other arts of instruction, has been invented, that the reluctance against truth might be overcome; and as phycis is given to children in confections, precepts have been hidden under a thousand appearances, that mankind may be bribed by a pleasure to escape destruction. In his beautiful allegory of *Truth, Falsehood, and Fiction*, he represents Truth as so repeatedly foiled in her contests with Falsehood, that in the anger of disappointment, she petitions *Jupiter* to be called back to her native skies, and leave mankind to the disorder and misery which they deserved, by submitting willingly to the usurpation of her antagonist. Instead of granting her request, he recommended her to consult the Muses by what methods she might obtain an easier reception, and reign without the toil of incessant war.—It was then discovered, that she obstructed her own progress, by the severity of her aspect and the solemnity of her dictates; and that men would never willingly admit her, till they ceased to fear her; since, by giving themselves up to *Falsehood*, they seldom made any sacrifice of their ease or pleasure, because she took the state that was most engaging, and always suffered herself to be dressed and painted by *Desire*. The Muses wove in the loom of *Pallas* a loose and changeable robe, like that in which *Falsehood* captivated her admirers; with this they invested *Truth*, and named her *Fiction*. She now went out again to conquer with more success; for when she demanded entrance of the *Passions*, they often mistook her for *Falsehood*, and delivered up their charge; but when she had once taken possession, she was soon disrobed by *Reason*, and shone out, in her original form, with native effulgence and resistless beauty.

This is plausible; but will not history and biography answer all the ends of fiction, unattended with its injurious effects? Here all is life, variety, and interest. Here is every thing to amuse, to recreate. Here the finest moral lessons are inculcated in the detail of facts. Here are passions, motives, actions, all forming the most exquisite delineations of character, set home upon the heart with the aid of the powerful conviction that these are *facts*. I am sure that none can have attended to the more secret and subtle operations of their own minds, without perceiving that a display of virtue or vice, embodied in a *fact*, has inconceivably more power over the mind, than the same character exhibited by the most extraordinary genius in a fiction. While reading the latter, we may have been deeply affected, we may have glowed with anger at the sight of vice, melted with pity at the display of misery, or soared in rapture at the exhibition of excellence; but when the book is laid down, and the mind recovers from the illusion, does not the recollection, that all this was the creation of imagination, exert a cold and chilling influence upon the heart, and go far to efface

almost every favorable impression, till, by a kind of revenge for the control which a *fiction* has had over us, we determined to forget it we have felt? We cannot do this in rising from a fact.

Fiction is generally overwrought. It is vice in caricature, or virtue in enamel: the former is frequently too bad to be dreaded as likely to happen to us: the latter too high to be an object of expectation. All the attendant circumstances are too artificially contrived. There is little that is like it in real life. Our passions are too much excited, our hopes are too much raised: and when we come from this ideal world into the every day scenes of ordinary life, we feel a sense of dulness, because every thing looks tame and common-place. The effect of such works is great for the time, but it is not a useful effect: it is like the influence of ardent spirits, which fits men for desperate adventures, but not for the more steady and sober efforts of ordinary enterprise.

Observe then, although I do not totally condemn all works of fiction, for then I should censure the practice of Him who spake as never man spake, whose parables were fictitious representations; yet I advise a sparing and cautious perusal of them, whether written in poetry or prose. History, biography, travels, accounts of the manners and customs of nations, will answer all the ends of fiction; they will amuse, and they will in the most easy and pleasing way instruct. They will exhibit to us every possible view of human nature, and every conceivable variety of character. They will introduce us to a real world, and exhibit to us the failings and the excellences of men of like passions with ourselves! and who, according to the complexion of their character, may be regarded as beacons to warn us, or the polar star to guide us.

Again, and again, I say, cultivate my children, a taste for the acquisition of knowledge: thirst after information, as the miser does after wealth; treasure up ideas with the same eagerness as he does pieces of gold. Let it not be said, that for you the greatest of human beings have lived, and the most splendid of human minds have written in vain.—You live in a world of books, and they contain worlds of thought. Devote all the time that can be lawfully spared from business to reading. Lose not an hour. Ever have some favorite author at hand, to the perusal of whose productions the hours and half hours, which would otherwise be wasted, might be devoted. Time is precious. Its fragments, like those of diamonds, are too valuable to be lost. Let no day pass without your attempting to gain some new idea. Your first object of existence, as I have already stated, should be the salvation of your soul: the next, the benefit of your fellow-creatures; and then comes the improvement of your mind.\*

## CHAPTER XV.

### ON AMUSEMENTS AND RECREATIONS.

It is a trite remark, that the mind, like a bow, will lose its power by being always strained; and that occasional relaxation from the cares of business, is necessary to preserve the vigor and elasticity of the human faculties. Allowing this to be true, it becomes a question, in what way recreation may be

\* I most earnestly recommend to all young persons the perusal of Mr. H. F. Burder's Treatise on Mental Culture; then the well known work of Dr. Watts, "On the improvement of the Mind;" and if they are disposed to pursue the subject, Dugald Stewart's elegant and valuable work on Mental Philosophy.



lawfully sought; or, in other words, what kind of amusement may be innocently resorted to. Here two rules may be laid down.

1. All recreations are improper, *which have an injurious influence upon the moral and religious character.* This is an axiom. No reasoning is necessary to support it; no eloquence is requisite to illustrate it; none but an atheist can oppose it.

2. All recreations are improper, which, by their nature, *have a tendency to dissipate the mind, and unfit it for the pursuits of business;* or which encroach too much on the time demanded for our necessary occupations. This rule is as intelligible and as just as the former.

These two directions, the propriety of which all must admit, will be quite sufficient to guide us in the choice of amusements.

First, there are some diversions, which, by leading us to *inflict pain produce cruelty of disposition.*

A reluctance to occasion misery even to an insect, is not a mere *decoration* of the character, which we are left at liberty to wear or to neglect; but it is a disposition which we are commanded, as matter of duty to cherish. It is not mere sensibility, but a necessary part of virtue. It is impossible to inflict pain, and connect the idea of gratification with such an act, without experiencing some degree of mental obduration. We are not surprised that he who, while a boy, amused himself in killing flies, should, when he became a sovereign, exhibit the character of a cruel and remorseless tyrant. To find pleasure in setting brutes to worry and devour each other, is a disposition truly diabolical; and the man who can find delight in dog-fighting, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, is quite prepared to imitate those cannibals who, in the popular insurrections and massacres of the French Revolution, sported with the mangled carcasses and palpitating limbs of their murdered victims, and dragged them about with their teeth in the gardens of the Tuilleries.

*Horse-racing*, in addition to the cruelty with which it is attended, is generally a means of assembling on the course, all the gamblers, swindlers, and black-legs in the neighborhood, and is the cause of much drunkenness, debauchery, and ruin.

All *field-sports*, of every kind, are, in my view, condemned by the laws of humanity. Shooting, coursing, hunting, angling, are all cruel. What agony is inflicted in hooking a worm or a fish: in maiming a bird: in chasing and worrying a hare: and to find *sport* in doing this, is inhuman and unchristian. To say that these animals are given for food, and must be killed, is not a reply to my argument. I am not contending against killing them, or eating them, but against the act of killing them for *sport*. The infliction of death, under any circumstances, and upon any creature, however insignificant in the scale of creation, is too serious a matter to be a source of amusement. No two terms can be more incongruous than death and sport. It seems perfectly monstrous, that after having subjected the irrational creation to the terrors of dissolution by his guilt, man should experience *pleasure* in executing the sentence. Death is the enemy even of brutes; and the irrational creation manifest symptoms of instinctive horror at his approach; and to find delight in throwing the shuddering victim to the devourer, is shocking. I would extend these remarks to all animals, and say, that it is unlawful to find *sport* in killing such as are *noxious*. Wolves, bears, serpents, are to be extirpated, because their continuance endangers human life; but to find pleasure in the act of killing even these, has a hardening tendency on the human heart.

Secondly, Some amusements tend to cherish *selfish and avaricious feelings*, and at the same time to produce that *gambling taste*, which tends to the

utter ruin of both the temporal and eternal interests of mankind. Billiards, cards, dice, have this tendency; and indeed, all other games that are played for money. The object of the player in these games is to get money, by a hasty process. What arts of fraud and deception are often resorted to, in order to avoid the loss and shame of defeat, and secure the game and honor of success. What anger and ill-will are often produced in the mind of the unsuccessful party. Even the rules of decorum, observed in polished society, are not sufficient, in many cases, to restrain the passionate invective, and the profane oath. I may here most confidently appeal to the frequenters of the card-table for the truth of what I say, when I affirm, that a want of success during an evening at whist is a trial of temper, which few are able to bear with honor to themselves, or the comfort of those around them. Passion, petulance, and sullenness, are always waiting under the table, ready to appear in the persons and conduct of the loser. I have had scenes described to me by spectators of them, which I should have thought a disgrace to the vulgar company assembled at an alehouse, much more to the *genteel party in the drawing-room*. Have not the most serious misunderstandings arisen from this source between man and wife? What wrath and fury has the latter, by her tide of ill success, brought down upon her head from her irritated husband. The winner sees all this, retains his ill-gotten gain, and knows not that all the while a chilling frost of selfishness is upon his heart, freezing up the generous feelings of his nature. Nothing is more bewitching than the love of gambling. The winner having tasted of the sweets of gain, is led forward by the hope of still greater gain, while the loser plunges deeper and deeper in ruin, with the delusive expectation of retrieving his lost fortune. How many have ruined themselves and their families for ever by this mad passion. How many have thrown down the cards and the dice, only to take up the pistol or the poison; and have rushed, with all their crimes about them, from the gambling-table to the—fiery lake in hell.

To affirm that these remarks are applicable only to those who play high, is nothing; because it is the nature of vice to be progressive. Besides, it is a fact, that many tradesmen, and even laboring people, have ruined themselves by the love of play. It is, as I have said, a most ensnaring practice, leading on from one degree to another, till multitudes, who began with only an occasional game, end in the most confirmed and inveterate habits of gambling.

Thirdly. Some amusements tend to *foster vanity and pride*, while at the same time, they generate a *distaste for all the serious pursuits of religion, and the sober occupations of domestic life*.

If I mistake not, these remarks will apply to balls, routs, and concerts. I am not quite sure that the *morals* of society have not suffered considerable deterioration by assemblies. Circumstances are connected with this species of amusement, the tendency of which is more than questionable. The mode of dress adopted at these fashionable resorts; the nature of the employment; the dissipating tendency of the music, the conversation, and the elegant uproar: the lateness of the hour to which the dazzling scene is protracted; the love of display which is produced; the false varnish which is thrown over many a worthless character, by the fascinating exterior which he exhibits in a ball-room have a tendency to break down the mounds of virtue, and expose the character to the encroachments of vice. And if it were conceded, which it certainly cannot be, that no immoral consequence results to those who occupy the upper walks of life, who are protected

by the decorum of elegant society, yet what mischief is produced to their humble imitators, who attend the assemblies which are held in the barn or the alehouse. I look upon dancing among these, to be a practice fraught with immorality; and my soul is horrified at this moment by remembering the details of a most tragic event which occurred in this neighborhood, a few years since, to an interesting female, who, after having lost her virtue on the night that followed the dance, was found, a few hours after, murdered either by her seducer or herself. Have nothing to do then with this fascinating, though injurious species of amusement. Besides, what an encroachment does it make upon time, which is demanded for other pursuits. How does it dissipate the mind, and poison it with a vain and frivolous taste for dress, and personal decoration. How completely does it unfit the soul for piety, and even the necessary occupations of domestic life. Let there be a love once acquired for these elegant recreations by any female, and, from my heart, I pity the man who is destined to be her husband.

My opinion of the *stage* I shall reserve for a separate chapter. In the mean time I shall reply to a question which no doubt, ere this you are ready to ask, "What amusements I would recommend."

I do not hesitate at once to observe, that young people stand in much less need than is supposed, of *any* amusement properly so called. Their spirits are buoyant, their cares are light, their sorrows few, and their occupations rarely very fatiguing to the mind. What more is necessary beyond mere change of employment, I should say, may be found in engagements both strengthening to the body and improving to the mind. A country ramble amidst the beauties of nature, where, surrounded by sights and sounds which have awakened and cherished the spirit of poetry, we may admire the works of God and man together, will, to every mind of taste or piety, be quite enough to refresh and stimulate the wearied faculties. The perusal of an entertaining and instructive book, where our best authors have said their best things, and in their best manner too, will have the same effect. My children, acquire a taste for reading. Aspire to an independence of the butterfly-pursuits of the pleasure-hunter. Seek for that thirst after knowledge, which when the soul is jaded with the dull and daily round of secular affairs, shall conduct her to the fountains of thought contained in the well-stocked library; where, as she drinks the pure perennial streams of knowledge, she forgets in their murmurs the toils of the day. Or, the study of natural philosophy, attended where an apparatus can be commanded, with a course of illustrative experiments, would be at once refreshing and instructive. And where young people are happily situated beneath the wing of their parents, the pleasures of home, the agreeable intercourse of the domestic circle, are no mean or insufficient recreations from the fatigues of business.

But perhaps many a youthful bosom will at this thought heave a sigh, and sorrowfully exclaim, "I am not at home. In that beloved retreat, and with its dear inhabitants, I should want no amusement. My father's greeting smile; my mother's fond embrace; the welcome of my brothers and my sisters; the kind looks, the fond inquiries, the interesting though unimportant conversation of all, would recruit my strength, and recreate my mind. But I am far from these. I am in a distant town, a stranger in a strange place; a mere lodger, where the attentions which I receive are all bought and paid for. Wearied and dispirited, I oftentimes return from the scene of labor, and find in the cold and heartless salutation of my host, and in the dreary solitude of my own chamber, that I am, indeed, no

at home. Often and often as I sit musing away the hour that intervenes between business and sleep, and carrying out into painful contrast my lodging and my home, I involuntarily exclaim,

"My friends do they now and then send  
A wish or a thought after me."

Who can wonder that in such a situation I should occasionally pay a visit to the theatre, or the concert, and seek to forget that I am not at home, by amusements which have a tendency to drown reflection and divert my mind. Oh! give me again the pleasures of home, and I will make a cheerful surrender of all that I have adopted as their substitutes."

I feel for such young persons. I too have been in their situation; I have felt all that they feel. I have wept at the contrast between being a stranger or a guest, and a happy child at home. I too have returned at night to meet the silent look, or cheerless greeting of the hostess, instead of the smiling countenance and fond expression of the mother that bore me, the father that loved me. I too have retired to my room to weep at thoughts of home. I can therefore sympathise with you. And shall I tell you how in these circumstances I alleviated my sorrows, and rendered my situation not only tolerable, but even sometimes pleasant? By the exercises and influence of true religion; by the intercourse of a holy fellowship with pious companions; and by the assistance of books. Try, do be persuaded to try, the same means:

"Religion, what treasures untold  
Reside in that heavenly world,  
More precious than silver and gold,  
Or all that this earth can afford."

This will find you a home, and a father and friends in every place. It will soften your banishment, and open to you springs of consolation, which shall send their precious streams into your forlorn abode. It will render you independent of the theatre, and the concert, and the ball room. It will guard you from vices, which, where they are committed, only serve to render the recollection of home still more intolerable. It will give you an interest and a share in all the religious institutions which are formed in the congregation with which you associate, and will thus offer you a recreation in the exercise of a holy and enlightened philanthropy.

In addition to this, cultivate a taste for reading.—Employ your leisure hours in gaining knowledge. Thus even *your* situation will be rendered comparatively comfortable, and the thoughts of home will neither destroy your happiness, nor send you for consolation to the polluting sources of worldly amusement.

But there are some who will reply, "I have neither taste for religion or reading, and what amusements do you recommend to me? None at all.—What! that man talk of *amusement*, who, by his own confession, is under the curse of heaven's eternal law, and the wrath of heaven's incensed King?—*Amusement!*! what, for the poor wretch who is on the brink of perdition, the verge of hell, and may the next hour be lifting up his eyes in torments, and calling for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. *Diversion!*! what, for him who is every moment exposed to that sentence, "Depart from me, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." What! going on to that place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched; where there is weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and calling for amusements!! Oh monstrous inconsistency!! We have heard of prisoners dancing in their chains, but who



ever heard of a poor creature asking for amusements on his way to the place of execution? This is your case. While you have no taste for religion, you are certainly under sentence of eternal death.— You are every day travelling to execution. Yet you are asking for amusements! And what will be your reflections in the world of despair, to recollect that the season of hope was employed by you, not in seeking the salvation of the soul, and everlasting happiness, but in mere idle diversions, which were destroying you at the very time they amused you.— Then will you learn, when the instruction will do you no good, that you voluntarily relinquished the fulness of joy which God's presence affords, and the eternal pleasures which are to be found at his right hand, for the joy of fools, which, as Solomon truly says, is but as "the cracking of thorns beneath the pot." *Before you think of amusements, seek for religion.*

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ON THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.

I do not hesitate for a moment, to pronounce the *theatre* to be one of the broadest avenues which lead to destruction; fascinating, no doubt it is, but on that account the more delusive and the more dangerous. Let a young man once acquire a taste for this species of entertainment, and yield himself up to its gratification, and he is in imminent danger of becoming a lost character, rushing upon his ruin.— All the evils that can waste his property, corrupt his morals, blast his reputation, impair his health, embitter his life, and destroy his soul, lurk in the purlieu of a theatre. Vice, in every form, lives, and moves, and has its being there. Myriads have cursed the hour when they first exposed themselves to the contamination of the stage. From that fatal evening they date their destruction. Then they threw off the restraints of education, and learnt to disregard the dictates of conscience. Then their decision, hitherto oscillating between a life of virtue and of vice, was made up for the latter. But I will attempt to support by argument and facts these strong assertions.

The stage cannot be defended as an *amusement*: for the proper end of an amusement is to recreate without fatiguing or impairing the strength and spirits. It should invigorate, not exhaust the bodily and mental powers; should spread an agreeable serenity over the mind, and be enjoyed at proper seasons. Is midnight the time, or the heated atmosphere of a theatre the place, or the passionate, tempestuous excitement of a deep tragedy the state of mind, that comes up to this view of the design of amusement! Certainly not.

But what I wish particularly to insist upon is, the *immoral and anti-christian tendency of the stage*. It is an indubitable fact, that the stage has flourished most, in the most corrupt and depraved state of society; and that in proportion as sound morality, industry, and religion advance their influence, the theatre is deserted. It is equally true that amongst the most passionate admirers, and most constant frequenters of the stage, are to be found the most dissolute and abandoned of mankind. Is it not too manifest to be denied, that piety as instinctively shrinks from the theatre, as human life does from the point of a sword or the draught of poison? Have not all those who have professed the most elevated piety and morality, borne an unvarying and uniform testimony against the stage? Even the more virtuous pagans condemned this amusement, as injurious to morals and the interests of nations. Plato, Livy, Xenophon, Cicero, Solon, Cato, Seneca, Ta-

citius, the most venerable men of antiquity; the brightest constellation of virtue and talents which ever appeared upon the hemisphere of philosophy, have all denounced the theatre as a most abundant source of moral pollution, and assure us that both Greece and Rome had their ruin accelerated by a fatal passion for these corrupting entertainments.— William Pryne, a satirical and pungent writer, who suffered many cruelties for his admirable productions in the time of Charles I, has made a catalogue of authorities against the stage, which contains every name of eminence in the heathen and Christian worlds: it comprehends the united testimony of the Jewish and Christian churches; the deliberate acts of fifty-four ancient and modern, general, national, provincial councils and synods, both of the Western and Eastern churches; the condemnatory sentence of seventy-one ancient Fathers, and one hundred and fifty modern Popish and Protestant authors; the hostile endeavors of philosophers and even poets; with the legislative enactments of a great number of Pagan and Christian states, nations, magistrates, emperors and princes.

The American Congress, soon after the declaration of Independence, passed the following motion. "Whereas true religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness,

"Resolved, That it be, and hereby is, earnestly recommended to the several states, to take the most effectual measures for the encouragement thereof, and for the suppression of *theatrical entertainments*, horse-racing, gaming, and such other diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners."

Now must not this be regarded in the light of very strong presumptive evidence of the immoral tendency of the stage? Does it not approach as near as can be to the general opinion of the whole moral world?

But let us examine the *average character of those productions which are represented on the stage*. If we go to *Tragedy*, we shall find that pride, ambition, revenge, suicide, the passionate love of fame and glory, all of which Christianity is intended to extirpate from the human bosom, are inculcated by the most popular plays in this department of the drama. It is true, gross cruelty, murder, and that lawless pride, ambition, and revenge, which trample on all the rights and interests of mankind, are reprobated; but I would ask, who needs to see vice acted in order to hate it? or will its being acted for our *amusement* be likely to increase our hatred of it upon right principles? As to *Comedy*, this is a thousand times more polluting than tragedy. Love and intrigue; prodigality dressed in the garb of generosity; profaneness dignified with the name of fashionable spirit; and even seduction and adultery; these are the usual materials which the comic muse combines and adorns to please and instruct her votaries. This department of the drama is unmixed pollution. How often is some profligate rake introduced to the spectators, furnished with a few traits of frankness and generosity, to interest them by his vicious career; and who so far reconciles them all to his crimes, as to tolerate his atrocities for the sake of his open-hearted, good-humored virtues. Who can wonder that young women should be prepared by such stuff for any intrigue with a bold and wily adventurer; or that young men should be encouraged to play the good-natured, heroic rake, which they have seen such a favorite with the public on the stage? Besides, how saturated are both tragedies, and comedies with irreverent appeals to heaven, profane swearing, and all the arts of equivocation and falsehood, and deception! What lascivious allusions are made; what

impure passages are repeated! What a fatal influence must this have upon the delicacy of female modesty. Think too of a young man coming at the hour of midnight from such a scene, with his passions inflamed by every thing he has seen and every thing he has heard; and then having to pass through ranks of wretched creatures waiting to ensnare him and rob him of his virtue; does it not require extraordinary strength of principle to resist the attack?

I admit that modern plays are in some measure purified from that excessive grossness which polluted the performances of our more ancient dramatists. But who knows not that vice is more mischievous in some circles of society, in proportion as it is more refined. The *arch equivoque* and *double entendre* of modern plays, "are well understood, and applied by a licentious audience; and the buzz of approbation, which is heard through the whole assembly, furnishes abundant proof that the effect is not lost." Little will go down with the public in the shape of comedy, farce, or opera, but what it pretty highly seasoned with indelicate allusions. Hence it is that even the newspaper critics, whose morality is, in general, not of the most saintly character, so often mention the too barefaced indecencies of new plays. Dramatic writers know very well how to cater for the public taste.

How many sentiments are continually uttered on the stage, how many indelicate allusions are made, which no man who had any regard to the virtue of his sons, or the feelings of his daughters, would allow to be uttered at his table. Are not whole passages repeatedly recited, which no modest man would allow to be read before his family? Nothing but the continuance of numbers could induce many females to sit and listen to what they hear at the theatre. Were any man to be in the habit of quoting in company the words which are in constant iteration at the playhouse, would he not be regarded as a person most dangerous to the virtue of others? And yet these nauseating exhibitions are heard with pleasure, when they are heard with the multitude. Can this be friendly to modesty, to virtue, to piety! Must there not be an insensible corrosion going on under such an influence upon the fine polish of female excellence, and upon the principle of the other sex? Is this avoiding the appearance of evil? Is it in accordance with that morality which makes an unchaste feeling to be sin, and that injunction which commands us to watch the heart with all diligence?

If indeed the word of God be the standard of morals, and no one but an infidel can deny it, then the whole mass of plays must be condemned, and with them the whole system of the playhouse. To ask whether the theatre can be justified before the bar of Christianity, whether it is in accordance with its doctrines, precepts, example, spirit, design, is really to insult common sense. I suppose its most passionate admirers will not try it in such a court; for that system which sums up all its morality, both in action and in motive, in that one sublime and holy precept, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," cannot look with a tolerating eye upon the stage. The morality of the stage and of the gospel are as diametrically opposed to each other as the east and the west. They stand *thus* opposed to each other:—pride to humility; ambition to moderation; revenge to forgiveness; falsehood to truth; lust to purity; profanity to piety; sensuality to spirituality. Let any man read our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, or St. Paul's eighth or twelfth chapter to the Romans, and say if the play and the playhouse can be in unison with Christianity.

Then remember *all the accompaniments of the stage*, the fascinations of music, painting, action, oratory;

and say, if when these are enlisted in the cause of fiction, *they do not raise the passions above their proper tone, and thus induce a distaste to grave and serious subjects, and a distaste for all the milder and more necessary virtues of domestic life.*

Add to this the company which is generally attracted to the theatre. I do not say that all who frequent the theatre are immoral; but I do affirm, that the most polluting and polluted characters of the town are sure to be there. Is it not a fact, that a person who would not wish to have his eyes and ears shocked with sights and sounds of indecency, must keep at a distance from the avenues of the stage? for these are ever crowded with the loosest characters of both sexes. Sir John Hawkins, in his life of Johnson, has a remark which strikingly illustrates and confirms what I have now advanced. "Although it is said of plays that they teach morality, and of the stage that it is the mirror of human life, these assertions have no foundation in truth, but are mere declamation: on the contrary, a playhouse, and the region about it, are the hotbeds of vice. How else comes it to pass, that no sooner is a theatre opened in any part of the kingdom, than it becomes surrounded by houses of ill fame! Of this truth, the neighborhood of the place I am now speaking of (Goodman's Fields Theatre) has had experience; one parish alone, adjacent thereunto, having, to my knowledge, expended the sum of thirteen hundred pounds in prosecutions, for the purpose of removing those inhabitants, whom, for instruction in the science of human life, the playhouse had drawn thither."

The arguments against the stage are strengthened by a reference to the general habits of the performers, and the influence which their employment has in the formation of their character. And here I may assert, that the sentiments of mankind have generally consigned this wretched class of beings to infamy. The story of the unfortunate Laberius exhibits, in a strong point of view, the odium which was attached to the profession of an actor among the Romans. Compelled by Cæsar, at an advanced period of life, to appear on the stage to recite some of his own works, he felt his character, as a Roman citizen, insulted and disgraced; and in some affecting verses, spoken on the occasion, he incensed the audience against the tyrant, by whose mandate he was obliged to appear before them. "After having lived," said he, "sixty years with honor, I left my house this morning a Roman knight, but shall return to it this evening an INFAMOUS STAGE-PLAYER. Alas! I have lived a day too long."

As to the feelings of *modern times*, is there a family in Britain, of the least moral worth, even amongst the middling class of tradesmen, which would not feel itself disgraced if any one of its members were to embrace this profession? I ask, if the character of players is not in general so loose, as to make it matter of surprise to find one that is truly moral? A performer, whether male or female, that maintains an unspotted reputation, is considered as an exception from the general rule. Their employment, together with the indolent line of life, to which it leads, is most contaminating to their morals. The habit of assuming a feigned character, and exhibiting unreal passions, must have a very injurious effect on their principles of integrity and truth. They are so accustomed to represent the arts of intrigue and gallantry, that it is little to be wondered at, if they should practise them in the most unrestrained manner.

SHUTTER, whose facetious powers convulsed whole audiences with laughter, and whose companionable qualities often "set the table in a roar," was a miserable being. The following anecdote, told from the best authority, will confirm this assertion: and



I am afraid, were we acquainted with many of his profession, we should find that his case is by no means singular. "Shuter had heard Mr. Whitefield, and trembled with apprehension of a judgment to come; he had also frequently heard Mr. Kinsman, and sometimes called on him in London. One day, accidentally meeting him in Plymouth, after some years of separation, he embraced him with rapture, and inquired if that was the place of his residence. Mr. Kinsman replied, 'yes; but I am just returned from London, where I have preached so often, and to such large auditories, and have been so indisposed, that Dr. Fothergill advised my immediate return to the country for change of air.' "And I," said Shuter, "have been acting Sir John Falstaff so often, that I thought I should have died, and the physicians advised me to come into the country for the benefit of the air. Had you died, it would have been in serving the best of masters; but had I, it would have been in the service of the devil. Oh, sir! do you think I shall ever be called again? I certainly was once; and if Mr. Whitefield had let me come to the Lord's table with him, I never should have gone back again. But the caresses of the great are exceedingly ensnaring. My Lord E—— sent for me to-day, and I was glad I could not go. Poor things! they are unhappy, and they want Shuter to make them laugh. But oh, sir, such a life as yours!—As soon as I leave you, I shall be King Richard. This is what they call a good play, as good as some sermons. I acknowledge there are some striking and moral things in it; but after it, I shall come again with my farce of 'A dish of all sorts,' and knock all that on the head. Fine reformers we!" Poor Shuter! once more thou wilt be an object of sport to the frivolous and the gay, who will now laugh at thee, not for thy drollery, but for thy seriousness; and this story, probably, will be urged against thee as the weakness of a noble mind; weakness let it be called, but in spite of himself, man must be serious at last. And when a player awakes to sober reflection, what agony must seize upon his soul. Let those auditories, which the comic performer has convulsed with laughter, witness a scene in which the actor retires and the man appears; let them behold him in the agonies of death, looking back with horror on a life of guilt, while despair is mingled with forebodings of the future. Players have no leisure to learn to die; and if a serious thought wander into the mind, the painful sigh which it excites is suppressed, and, with an awful desperation, the wretched creature rushes into company to be delivered from himself. A more careless, a more unreflecting being than a player, cannot exist; for if an intense impression of the dignity of reason, the importance of character, and future responsibility, be once felt, he can be a player no longer.

To send young people therefore to the playhouse to form their manners, is to expect they will learn truth from liars, virtue from profligates, and modesty from harlots.

Can it then be right, even on the supposition that we could escape the moral contagion of the stage, to support a set of our fellow-creatures in idleness, and in a profession which leads to immorality, licentiousness, and profligacy?

But, my dear children, I have not only arguments to bring in proof of the immoral tendency of the stage, but I have facts. It is useless to contend against these. I am distressed, while I write, to think of the once promising young men who, to my certain knowledge, have been utterly ruined by resorting to this scene of polluting amusement. I am not allowed to disclose the details, or I could a tale unfold that would shock every right feeling in your hearts.

It was but a few days since, that a venerable and holy man, now the deacon of a Christian church, said to me, "Sir, the theatre had nearly brought me to the gallows. There I found associates who introduced me to every crime. When likely to be prevented, by want of money, from going to meet them at the theatre, I robbed my father, to gain a shilling admission to the gallery."

Take warning, then, and have nothing to do with the theatre. Avoid it as one of the avenues to the broad road which leadeth to destruction. Run not with the multitude to do evil. Be not thrown off your guard, and enticed to sin, by being directed to some who have never been injured by such amusements. Would it be any inducement to you to venture near a lazaretto, to be pointed to some person who had breathed an atmosphere tainted with the plague without receiving the infection? I admit that the danger is not the same in all cases. Persons whose connections, habits, characters, are formed, may not receive so much injury as younger persons; though the most virtuous and moral cannot, I am sure, escape all harm; even they must have their mental purity injured, and their imagination corrupted; they must acquire a greater and greater distaste for religion, and irreverence towards God; but to young people, and to young men especially, the danger is greater than I can describe; to them the doors of the theatre are as the jaws of the devouring lion.\*

## CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE PERIOD WHICH ELAPSES BETWEEN THE TIME OF LEAVING SCHOOL, AND THE AGE OF MANHOOD.

YOUNG people, while at school, generally look forward with much desire, and longing anticipation, to the happy time when they shall terminate their scholastic pursuits, throw off the restraints of the seminary, and enter upon the engagements which are to prepare them for their future station in life. They are seldom aware of the immense importance of this period of their existence; and but rarely consider, *that it is at this time the character usually assumes its permanent form.*

I will suppose, my dear children, that you have now quitted the school-room for the warehouse, the office, or the shop; exchanged grammars and dictionaries for journals and ledgers; and the researches of learning for the pursuits of business. All is new, and all is interesting. Youthful feelings are subsiding into something like a consciousness of approaching manhood; and the comparative insignificance of the schoolboy is giving way to the incipient importance of the man of business. At this very point and period of your history, it becomes you to halt and reflect. Instead of being led on in joyous thoughtlessness, by the new scenes that are opening before and around you, and leaving your habits and your character to be formed by accident or by chance, I beseech you to ponder on the very critical circumstances in which you are now placed.

*The period which elapses from fourteen to eighteen years of age, is indeed the crisis of your history and character.* It is inconceivably the most eventful and influential term of your whole mortal existence.—Comparing the mind to substances which, under the influence of heat, are capable of being moulded to any form, it is at this period of its history that it is

\* I most earnestly recommend to all young persons who have any doubts upon this subject, or any taste for theatrical representations, the perusal of an admirable treatise on this subject by Dr. Styles.

in the most suitable temperature and consistency to yield to the plastic influence of external causes, and to receive its permanent form and character: before this, it is too fluid and yielding, and afterwards too stiff and unbending. This, this is the very time, when the ever variable emotions, passions, and pursuits of boyhood, begin to exhibit something like the durable and settled forms of manhood.

In reference to the affairs of this life; if a young person ever become a good mechanic, or a good tradesman, he gains the elements of his future excellence about this period. So it is in poetry, painting, learning. Before this, the first decisive and unequivocal traits of genius sometimes appear, and even after this, they are sometimes developed; but generally speaking, it is from the age of fourteen to eighteen, that the marks of future eminence are put forth. It is the vernal season of mind, and habit, and genius. The same remarks will apply to the formation of character. Then the passions acquire new vigor, and exert a mighty influence; then the understanding begins to assert its independence, and to think for itself; then there is a declaration of its liberty on the part of the mind, and a casting away of the trammels of education; then there is a self-confidence and a self-reliance, which have received as yet few checks from experience; then the social impulse is felt, and the youth looks round for companions and friends; then the eye of parental vigilance, and the voice of parental caution, are generally at a distance. Then, in fact, the future character is formed. At this time, generally speaking, religion is chosen or abandoned; and the heart is given to God or the world. Can any thing be more awfully important, than these reflections, to those who are yet about this age? You are now deciding for both worlds at once. You are now choosing to become a Christian on earth, and a seraph in heaven, or a worldling here, and a fiend hereafter. You are now setting out on a journey which is to conduct you to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, or to the blackness of darkness for ever. Yes, the starting point for the realms of eternal day, or the regions of eternal night has generally been found to be within the period which I have named.

These remarks apply more strictly to young men than to persons of the opposite sex: inasmuch, as females generally remain at home, under the eye, and voice, and example of parental piety, and are far less exposed than boys to the temptations and sins of youth. All young men, therefore, of this age, should pause and reflect thus:—"I am now arrived at that period, which must be considered as the most eventful era of my whole existence: when my character, both for time and eternity, will in all probability be formed; when I may be said to be commencing the career which is to terminate in heaven or hell; as well as that path which is to lead me to respectability and comfort, or to depression and poverty in the present world. How critical my age! How important that I should consider wisely my situation, and decide aright!"

Permit me to give you a little advice, in some measure suited to your circumstances.

1. Most sacredly observe the Sabbath, and constantly attend the means of grace.

Let nothing induce you to prostitute the hallowed day to worldly pleasure. Never listen to the enticements of a companion, who would tempt you, even once to forsake the house of God. Abandon such an acquaintance. He is unfit for you, and will ruin you. Sabbath-breaking is a sin of most hardening tendency. When tempted to commit it, imagine you hear the awful voice of divine prohibition, followed with the loud deep groan of a holy father, and the exclamation of a pious mother, "Oh, my son! my

son! do not pierce my heart with anguish." Attach yourselves to a sound, evangelical ministry, and listen not to those who subvert the very foundations of the gospel. Avoid those preachers who oppose all that is peculiar to Christianity.

2. Keep up attention to the private duties of Religion.

Never let a day pass without reading the Scriptures, and private prayer. While these practices are continued, I have hope of you: they show that piety has still some hold upon your heart. Secure some portion of every day, if it be but a quarter of an hour in the morning, and in the evening, for this most important duty. Should you not have a chamber to yourselves, let not the company of others prevent your keeping up this practice. It would be better, however, in this case to retire to your room when you can have it to yourself.

3. Be very careful in the selection of companions.

All that I have before said on the subject of company, applies with great force to this period of your life. It is now that the mischief of evil associations will be felt in all its devastating influence. One bad companion at this time, when the character is assuming its permanent form, will give a most fatal direction. Your company will probably be courted; but resist every overture which is not made by individuals of well-known, unbending virtue.

4. Strive to excel in the business or profession to which your life is to be devoted.

It is quite a laudable ambition for a man to aspire to eminence in his secular vocation. Be not satisfied with mediocrity in any thing that is lawful. Even as a tradesman, you should endeavor to be distinguished. It will give you weight in society, and thus, by increasing your influence, augment the means of your usefulness. A dolt, however pious he may be, possesses but little weight of character. Give your mind therefore to business. Penetrate into all its secrets, comprehend all its principles, study all its bearings. Care nothing about pleasure; but find your recreation in your employment. It is astonishing how few rise to eminence in their calling, either in trade or in the professions. The summits are gained by a very small number; the multitude grovel below. Why? Because they did not seek nor begin to ascend during their apprenticeship. They did not give themselves wholly to these things during this important season. Excellence in any department of human affairs, can be looked for, only from diligent and early culture. Industry and close application will keep you out of the way of temptation. Let your mind be occupied with business, and there will be neither leisure nor inclination for polluting amusements.

5. If your attention to business leaves any time unoccupied, I advise you to carry on a course of reading.

Make companions of useful books, and you will need no other. And as it is every man's chief praise to excel in his own profession, let your reading bear a relation to that in which you are engaged.\*

6. If you can find a pious and intelligent associate, embrace the opportunity of innocent and pleasurable companionship; "for as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."—With such a friend, carry on some course of intellectual improvement, and both give and receive the stimulus which fellowship affords.

Again and again, remember the tremendous importance which attaches to the period to which this chapter more particularly refers; and believing, as you must, that it is from fourteen to eighteen, the

\* The author hopes he shall be pardoned for the frequency with which he urges a taste for reading. He knows the importance of the subject.



character, in relation to both worlds, is generally formed, judge what manner of persons ye ought to be at that time, if you wish to be a good tradesman, and real Christian upon earth, or a glorified and happy spirit in heaven.\*

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ON PUBLIC SPIRIT.

You are born, my dear children, in no common age of the world. You have entered upon the stage of existence, when some of the most interesting scenes of the great drama are being presented. There are eras, when the moral world seems to stand still, or to retrograde; and there are others, when it is propelled with accelerated movements towards the goal. Ours is of the latter kind. After the dark and stormy epoch, which was terminated by the glorious revolution of 1688, the churches of Christ, blessed with religious liberty, sunk to inglorious repose.—Little was done, either to improve the moral condition of our own population at home, or the state of heathen countries abroad. *Whitefield* and *Wesley* broke in upon this slumber, when it seemed to be most profound. From that time, the spirit of religious zeal awoke, and increasing its energies, and multiplying its resources till our days, it now exhibits a glorious array of means and instruments, from which in the long run, might be expected the conversion of the world.

Christendom presents at this moment a sublime and interesting spectacle in its Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, with all the other institutions adapted to the moral wants of every class and condition of mankind. War is not only declared, but prosecuted with vigor, against the powers of darkness; the hosts of the Lord are marching forth to the field of conflict; the sound of the trumpet is heard, and the call of warriors floats on the gale. Spiritual patriotism is breathed into the souls of all denominations of Christians. Instruments of the holy warfare are invented and distributed, which suit the hands of persons of every rank, condition, stature, and strength; while females are invited to emulate the Spartan women of antiquity, and assist in this conflict by the side of their fathers, husbands, and brothers.

All young people ought to enlist themselves in this cause. They should rise up into life, *determined to do all the good they can, and to leave the world better than they found it.* To see them reluctant to come forward, is an indelible disgrace to them. It is a poor, miserable kind of life to live only for ourselves; it is, in fact, but half living. It is an opposition both to reason and revelation. He that does nothing to bless others, starves his own soul. You must therefore set out in life, my children, with a resolution, by God's help, to act the part of a religious philanthropist. "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." Aspire to this honor. Think how many things you can already do. You can instruct a class of ignorant children in a Sunday school.\* You can teach

adults to read. You can distribute religious tracts. You can join in the labors of Bible associations, or the exertions of juvenile missionary societies.

Here, however, I must suggest a caution or two. Females, who are employed in the labor of collecting gratuitous contributions to public societies of any kind, should be very watchful against the least infringement on that delicacy and modesty of character which is the chief ornament of their sex. Their exertions, I know are the life's blood of some causes; be it so: but let their benevolence flow like the vital fluid through the veins—unseen, unheard. I believe, that, in general, the strictest rules of modesty have been observed by the female collectors of our Missionary Societies; but I have heard of instances very much to the contrary. Happily, such cases are rare. I think it quite questionable whether very young females, whose characters are scarcely formed, should be thus employed.

It is more necessary still to caution young men against acquiring, by their activity, a bold, forward, obtrusive, and dictatorial temper. If zeal should render them conceited, vain, and meddling, it would be a heavy deduction from its clear amount of usefulness. There is some little danger, lest Satan, perceiving it to be impossible to repress the ardor of youth, should attempt to corrupt it.

Observing these cautions, you cannot be too ardent in the cause of religion, and the interests of the human race. Those who are likely to occupy the middling classes of society, who are the sons and daughters of persons in comparatively affluent circumstances, and are likely, by the blessing of God, to occupy the same rank themselves, should feel most specially bound to consecrate their energies to the public welfare, inasmuch as they possess far more means of usefulness than others, and are likely to have greater influence in society. But even the poorest can do something. There is no one who is destitute of all the means of doing good. In France, during the reign of the late Emperor, the conscription law extended to persons of all ranks in society; and, in the same regiment, the sons of the rich and of the poor contended, side by side, for the glory of their country; nor did the former think themselves degraded by such an association; they felt that to fight under the imperial and victorious eagle, was an honor sufficient to annihilate every other consideration. How much more justly will this apply to persons who are marshalled under the banner of the cross!

It is of the utmost importance that young people should begin life with a considerable portion of public spirit in their character; since it is rarely found that this virtue, if planted late, attains to any considerable magnitude, beauty, or fruitfulness. The seeds of benevolence should be sown, together with those of piety, in the first spring of our youth; then may we expect a rich autumnal crop. The first lesson which a child should learn, from his parents is, *how to be blessed*; and the second, *how to be a blessing*.

You have been taught this, my children, from the very dawn of reason; now then practise it. Live for some purpose in the world. Act your part well. Fill up the measure of your duty to others. Conduct yourself so as that you shall be missed with sorrow when you are gone. Multitudes of our species are living in such a selfish manner, that they are not likely to be remembered a moment after their disappearance. They leave behind them scarcely any traces of their existence, but are forgotten almost as though they had never been. They

dolence, or pride, or whatever else be the cause of their secession, they must give an account at the bar of Christ.

\* See an excellent little work, entitled, "Character essential to Success in Life, addressed to those who are approaching Manhood," by the Rev. Isaac Taylor, of Ongar.

\* It is to the great dishonor of many young people, in affluent circumstances, that they are retiring from our Sunday schools, and leaving the work to those who are in humbler life. Well, we must do without them; but let them remember, that for their in-

are, while they live, like one pebble lying unobserved amongst millions on the shore, and when they die, they are like that same pebble thrown into the sea, which just ruffles the surface, sinks, and is forgotten, without being missed from the beach. They are neither regretted by the rich, wanted by the poor, nor celebrated by the learned. Who has been the better for their life! Who are the worse for their death! Whose tears have they dried up, whose wants supplied, whose miseries have they healed? Who would unbar the gate of life, to readmit them to existence; or what face would greet them back again to our world with a smile? Wretched, unproductive mode of existence! Selfishness is its own curse—it is a starveling vice. The man that *does* no good, *gets* none. He is like the heath in the desert, neither yielding fruit, nor seeing when good cometh; a stunted, dwarfish, miserable shrub.

*We are sent into the world to do good*, and to be destitute of public spirit, is to forget one half our errand upon earth. Think what opportunity there is for the increase and operations of this noble disposition. We are in a world which abounds with evil. There are six hundred millions of immortal souls, yet enslaved in their minds by the chains of Pagan superstition or Mohammedan delusions, aliens to the common wealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, without God and without hope in the world: there are one hundred and twenty millions following the *Papal Beast*, and bearing his image: there are nine millions of the seed of Abraham, wandering as vagabonds over the face of the whole earth, with the thick veil of unbelief upon their hearts. In our own country, many towns and villages are yet unbled with the faithful preaching of the gospel: multitudes of adults are still without Bibles to read, and myriads of children without a knowledge of letters: ignorance of the grossest kind, vice of the most abominable forms, are to be found in every street. And then, as to positive misery, what boundings are to be seen in every collection of human abodes: where can we go and not hear the groans of creation ascending around us, and not see the tears of sorrow flowing in our path? Poverty meets us with its heart-breaking tale of want and woe: disease in a thousand shapes appeals to our compassion: widows, orphans, destitute old men, and fatherless babes, with numbers ready to perish, are almost every where to be seen. Shall we live at the centre of so much sin, ignorance, and wretchedness, and not feel it our duty to do good! What a wretch must he be, who, in such a world, is destitute of PUBLIC SPIRIT? For all that selfishness ever hoarded, may you my children, never be cursed with an unfeeling heart. Here is something for all to do, and all should do what they can.

Consider the *felicity of doing good*. Public spirit is a perennial source of happiness in a man's own bosom. The miser is rightly named: the word signifies miserable, and miserable he is. Benevolence is happiness. Its very tears are more to be desired than the most exulting smiles which avarice ever bestowed upon its accumulating treasures. Who does not covet that exquisite delight which Job must have experienced in the days of his prosperity, and of which he thus speaks: "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, then it gave witness unto me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause that I knew not I searched out." O tell me, what are all the pleasures of sense or appetite, all the gay festivities of worldly amuse-

ments, when compared with this? To do good, is to be like God in operation and bliss; for he is the *blessed* God, because he is the *merciful* God.

Public spirit is *most honorable*. Even the heathen accounted a benefactor a most honorable character. Never does humanity appear adorned with so bright a crown of glory, as when distinguished benevolence, united with humble piety, enters into the character. When a young lady, instead of frittering away her time in frivolous pursuits, parties of pleasure, personal decoration, or scenes of vanity, employs her hours in visiting the cottages of the poor, alleviating the sorrows of the wretched, reading to the sick, how like an angel does she appear: and one can almost fancy that she is watched with exalted delight, on her visits of mercy, by the heavenly messengers who minister to the heirs of salvation, and who hail her as a coadjutor in their embassies of love. What is the most celebrated beauty that ever became the centre of attraction, and the object of voluptuous gaze, and the subject of general envy to one sex, of admiration to the other in the ball-room, where, amidst the blaze of diamonds and the perfumery of the East, she displayed her charms; compared with that modest and retiring young woman, who, in her woollen cloak and mry shoes, is seen on a cold wintry day at the sick-bed of the poor expiring mother, first reviving the sinking frame of the sufferer with the cordials she has prepared with her own hands, then dispensing bread to her clamorous hungry babes, then comforting her agitated mind with the consolations of religion, and, last of all, soothing the troubled breast of the distressed husband with the prospect of a country, where there shall be no more death!

Of what is the man of polished manners, insinuating address, sparkling wit, and endless anecdote, whose society is courted, and who is the life of every company into which he enters; who every where receives the incense of praise, and the worship of admiration; I say, what is this man, in real grandeur, utility, and moral beauty of character, to the unassuming youth, who, though well educated and extensively read, and with a mind that could luxuriate in all the pleasures of literary pursuits, devotes a large portion of his time to the exercises of benevolence: who on a Sabbath journeys to some neighboring village on foot, sustaining the storms of winter, and the sultry heats of summer, to teach a school of ignorant children, bound to him by no tie but that of our common nature, to read the word of God: who is often seen in the retired streets and alleys of his own town, checking the torrents of wickedness by the distribution of tracts, or the circulation of the Bible: who, when fatigued with business, would gladly seek the repose of home, or else, thirsting for knowledge, would fain converse with books, but instead of this, devotes his evening hours to assist in managing the business of public institutions!

Need I ask which of these two is the most honorable character? They admit of no comparison.—The wreath of literary fame, the laurel of the warrior, the tribute of praise offered to superior wit, are empty and worthless compared with the pure bright crown of the philanthropist. There is a time coming when the former shall be of no value in the eyes of their possessors, or the world; but the distinctions of superior beneficence, belong to an order which shall be acknowledged in heaven, and shall be worn with unfading brilliancy through eternity.

I exhort, therefore, my children, that you do all the good you can, both to the souls and bodies of your fellow-creatures: for this end, as I have already said, you were born into the world; and society has claims upon your attention, which you cannot neglect without disregarding the authority



of God. Give your *property* for this purpose.—Begin life with a conviction that every one ought to devote a fair portion of his worldly substance for the benefit of others. No man ought to set apart a less proportion of his income for the good of the public, than a tenth. Whatever estate yours should be, whether great or small, consider that it comes to you with a reserved claim of one tenth for the public. Consider yourself as *having a right* to only nine tenths. Pay tithes of all you possess to the cause of God and man. Be frugal in your general expenditure, that you may have the more to do good with. Waste not that upon unnecessary luxuries of dress or living, which thousands and millions want for necessary comfort and religious instruction. The noblest transformation of property is not into personal jewels, or splendid household furniture, or costly equipages; but into clothing for the naked, food for the hungry, medicine for the sick, knowledge for the ignorant, holiness for the vicious, salvation for the lost.

Give your *influence*, whatever it be, to the cause of the public. We have all a circle of influence, and it is more extensive than we imagine. We are all, and always doing good or harm. Two persons never meet, however short the duration, or whatever be the cause of the interview, without exerting some influence upon each other. An important transaction, a casual hint, a studied address, each and all may become the means of controlling the mind of those with whom we have to do. Let *your* influence be all thrown into the scale of the public good. Do your own duty, and endeavor to rouse others to do theirs.

Let your exertions in the public cause, be the result of *deliberate purpose*, not of mere accident. *Set yourselves* to do good. Pursue a system, and act not from caprice. Let not your zeal be a blaze at one time, and a mere spark at another. *Study your situation, circumstances, talents, and let your benevolence flow through that channel which Providence has more especially opened before you.* All are not fitted for, nor are they called to the same work. In the division of the labor of mercy, occupy that station, and be content with that work, to which you are obviously destined. Avoid the disposition *which will be first in the front rank, or no where.* This is selfishness, not benevolence: selfishness operating in the way of activity, instead of indolence: of giving, instead of hoarding. Be anxious to do good, though, like the ministering angels, your agency should never be seen, but only felt. Do not be discouraged by difficulty, nor disheartened by ingratitude: seek your reward in the approbation of conscience, and the smile of God, not in the acknowledgments of men. Persevere to the end of life; and be not weary in well doing. Be diligent, for the world is dying around you, and you are dying with it. You are young; but you are mortal.—Your time of working may be short, and therefore strive to do much in a little time; for a man's life is not to be measured so much by the years that he lives, as by the work he does. You may die, but if you do good, your work lives; lives and multiplies its kind on earth, and then follows you to heaven, to live in your own remembrance, and in the happiness of others through everlasting ages.

"As therefore we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men; especially unto them that are of the household of faith: and let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."\*

\* Every young person ought to read that incomparable work of Cotton Mather's, entitled, "Essays to do good," edited by the Rev. G. Burder.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ON FEMALE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, VIRTUES, AND PURSUITS.\*

AS THE perusal of these volumes is intended for those who may be supposed to have finished, or are near the completion of scholastic pursuits, all that can be designed in this chapter, is to follow up the object of a good education, which probably it might have been the felicity of many of my female readers to receive; or, in the opposite case, to correct the faults, and point out in what way to supply the defects of a bad one.

"A young lady may excel in speaking French and Italian, may repeat a few passages from a volume of extracts; play like a professor, and sing like a Syren; have her dressing-room decorated with her own drawings, tables, stands, screens, and cabinets; nay, she may dance like Sempronia herself, and yet may have been very badly educated.—I am far from meaning to set no value whatever on any or all of these qualifications; they are all of them elegant, and many of them properly tend to the perfecting of a polite education. These things in their measure and degree may be done, but there are others which should not be left undone. Many things are becoming, but 'one thing is needful.'—Besides, as the world seems to be fully apprized of the value of whatever tends to embellish life, there is less occasion here to insist on its importance.

"But though a well-bred young lady may lawfully learn most of the fashionable arts, yet it does not seem to be the end of education to make women of fashion *dancers, singers, players, painters, actresses, sculptors, gilders, varnishers, engravers, and embroiderers.* Most men are commonly destined to some profession, and their minds are consequently turned each to its respective object. Would it not be strange if they were called out to exercise their profession, or to set up their trade, with only a little general knowledge of the trades of other men, and without any previous definite application to their own peculiar calling? The profession of ladies, to which the bent of their instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of families. They should be hitherto trained with a view to these several conditions, and be furnished with a stock of ideas and principles, and qualifications and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occasion may demand, to each of these respective situations; for though the arts, which merely embellish life, must claim admiration, yet when a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and dress, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him; one who can reason and reflect, and feel, and judge, and act, and discourse, and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, soothe his sorrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children."†

This is sound reasoning, and unquestionable discretion; it proceeds on the obvious and indisputable principle, that the excellence of means is to be judged of by their adaptation to the end to be produced; and the value of an instrument to be appreciated by its fitness for the work contemplated. That is a perfect female education, which best prepares a woman for the station in society which Providence has destined her to occupy. And what is that station? To be wives, mothers, and mistresses.—Think not that this is degrading woman below her

\* The Author has departed in this\* chapter from the style of direct and particular address to his children, to a more general form of instruction.

† Mts. Hannah More.

just rank, or that such a station requires nothing more than an initiation into the mysteries of the kitchen, or a memory well stored with the responses of the "Cook's Oracle." If to be the suitable companion of a sensible man; the judicious mother of a rising family; the neat and orderly and frugal mistress of an extensive household; if to be qualified to counsel her husband in the intricacies of life, to soothe him in his troubles, to lighten his heart of half its load of care, to enliven his solitude with the charm of her conversation, and render his home "the soft green," on which his weary spirit shall love to repose; if to be qualified to train up her children in the paths of religion, to form them to habits of virtue, to preside over their education, and the formation of their character, so as to multiply in them her own image of female excellence, and raise in each of them her second lovely self; if to be qualified to render her house attractive, both to its stated inhabitants, and the friends who may occasionally resort to it: I say, if this be a low station, and fitness for it be nothing more than mean qualifications, where, in all this world shall we find any one that is high, or noble, or useful?

For these sacred occupations has Providence destined the female sex; and say, what kind of education fits for such a scene of endearing and important duties? For such a circle of obligations, she should indeed be *accomplished*: "no term however, has been more abused than this. *Accomplishment* is a word that signifies completeness, perfection. But I may safely appeal to the observation of mankind, whether they do not meet with swarms of youthful females, issuing from our boarding schools, as well as emerging from the more private scenes of domestic education, who are introduced into the world, under the broad and universal title of *accomplished ladies*, of whom it cannot very truly be pronounced, that they illustrate the definition, by a completeness which leaves nothing to be added, and a perfection which leaves nothing to be desired."

"This phrenzy of accomplishments, unhappily, is no longer restricted within the usual limits of rank and of fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with increasing violence, from the elegantly dressed, but slenderly portioned curate's daughter, to the equally fashionable daughter of the little tradesman, and of the more opulent, but not more judicious farmer.—And is it not obvious, that as far as this epidemical mania has spread, this very valuable part of society is declining in usefulness, as it rises in its unlucky pretensions to elegance? And this revolution of the manners of the middle class, has so far altered the character of the age, as to be in danger of rendering obsolete the heretofore common saying, that "most worth and virtue are to be found in the middle station." For I do not scruple to assert, that in general, as far as my observation has extended, this class of females, in what relates both to religious knowledge, and to practical industry, falls short, both of the very high and the very low. Their new course of education, and the habits of life, and elegance of dress, connected with it, peculiarly unfits them for the active duties of their own very important condition; while, with frivolous eagerness and second-hand opportunities, they run to snatch a few of those showy acquirements which decorate the great. This is done apparently with one or other of these views; either to make their fortune by marriage, or, if that fail, to qualify them to become teachers of others: hence the abundant multiplication of superficial wives, and of incompetent and illiterate governesses."\*

By accomplishments, I believe, are usually in-

tended dancing, music, drawing, the languages, &c. &c.

As for *dancing*, if it be allowable at all in a system of Christian education, it cannot be permitted to rise to a higher rank than that of mere *physical training*, which should be strictly confined to the school, and laid aside for ever when the school is quitted for home. Balls of every kind, public and private, *baby* assemblies and adult ones, are, in my judgment, reprehensible and injurious; and if our Lord's exposition of the seventh commandment be correct, I am perfectly sure that an assembly-room is no place for *Christian* morals: the half-naked costume, there exhibited, has the same effect as Montesquieu ascribes to the dances of the Spartan virgins, which taught them "to strip chastity itself of modesty." Piety looks round in vain, in a ball-room, for one single object congenial with its nature.

*Music* has not the same objections. The acquisition of this pleasing science requires a vigorous exercise of that faculty of the mind which is the foundation of all knowledge—I mean *attention*; and therefore, like the mathematics, is valuable, not merely for its own sake, but as a part of mental education.\* Besides this, the ear is tuned by its Maker to harmony, and the concord of sweet sounds is a pleasant and innocent recreation. Music becomes sinful, only when too much time is occupied in acquiring the science, or when it is applied to demoralizing compositions. I am decidedly of opinion that, in general, far more time is occupied in this accomplishment than ought to be thus employed. Many pupils practise three, four, five, hours a day. Now, suppose four hours a day be thus spent, commencing from six years of age, and continuing till eighteen, then leaving out the Sundays, and allowing thirteen days annually for travelling, there will be 14,400 hours spent at the pianoforte, which, allowing ten hours a day for the time usually devoted to study, will make nearly four years out of twelve, given to music. Can this be justified, my female friends, on any principle of reason or revelation? What ideas might have been acquired, what a stock of knowledge amassed, what habits of mental application formed, in this time! And what renders this the more culpable is, that all this time is spent in acquiring a science which, as soon as its possessor is placed at the head of a family, is generally neglected and forgotten. If it be really true, therefore, that music cannot be acquired without practising four hours a day, I do not hesitate to say that the sacrifice is far too costly; and females should forego the accomplishment, rather than purchase it at such a rate. If the great design, and chief excellence of the female character, were to make a figure for a few years in the drawing-room, to enliven the gay scene of fashionable resort, and, by the freshness of her charms, and the fascination of her accomplishments, to charm all hearts, and conquer one, then let females give all their precious hours till they can play like Orpheus, or sing like a Syren; but if it be what I have already stated, then, indeed, it will sound like a meagre qualification for a wife, a mother, or a mistress, to say "she is an exquisite performer on the harp or piano."

*Drawing*, with all the fancy operations of the brush, the pencil, the needle, and the scissors, are innocent and agreeable, provided they are kept in

\* This, however, supposes that the pupil is really made to comprehend the theory of music as she goes on, and is made to play by the *notes*, instead of the *memory*. The ignorance of some teachers, and the indolence of others, deprive music of all its salutary power to strengthen the mind, and reduces it to the mere business of teaching a child to play a few tunes, which, bullfinch like, she has learnt by rote.



the place of recreations, and are not suffered to rise into occupations. Of late years they have acquired a kind of hallowed connection, and Fancy has been seen carrying her painted and embroidered productions to lay on the altar of Mercy and of Zeal. These things are sinful only when they consume too much time, and draw the mind from the love and pursuit of more important and more necessary duties. They are little elegant trifles, which will do well enough to fill up the *interstices* of our time, but must not displace the more momentous objects, which require and occupy its larger portions.

The *languages* are accomplishments, for which there is a great demand in the system of modern education. I confess plainly, at once, that I rate the importance of French at a much lower rate than many do. I believe not one in a hundred who pretend to learn it, ever derive the least advantage from it. The object of acquiring a foreign language, is to converse with those who speak it, or to be as a key to all the literature which it contains. To be able to hammer out a few sentences, ill-pronounced and worse constructed; to tell what a table, or a house, or a door is, or pass the usual compliments in French, is a miserable reward for years of dreaming or yawning over *Levizac* or *Du Fief*. If, then, you have begun French, or Italian, and still retain any thing of what you have learnt, give a moderate portion of your time to recover what else will soon be utterly lost; for nothing is so soon lost from the mind as a *little* of a foreign language. Pursue the study till you can, at least, read it with nearly as much ease as your mother tongue. Perhaps the chief advantage from this accomplishment is, that it raises our reputation a little in elegant society, and so far increases our weight of character, and thus enlarges the sphere of our usefulness.

On the subject of accomplishments, then, my views are sufficiently explicit. The greater part of them I by no means condemn. Custom has rendered them necessary, religion allows them to be innocent, and ingenuity can render them useful. Piety is not in a state of hostility with taste, and would not look more lovely in Gothic barbarity than in Grecian elegance. Provided she maintain all her sanctity, dignity, spirituality and benevolence, she does not appear less inviting, when attired by the Muses and attended by the Graces. Females may play, and draw, and paint, and write Latin, and speak Italian and French, provided the time, the money, and the admiration lavished on these external acquirements, be all within reasonable limits: provided they are regarded as sources of private entertainment, not as arts of public display; are considered as recreations from more severe and necessary pursuits, not as the chief end of education; and are viewed as the mere appendages of excellence, not its substitute.

It unfortunately happens, however, that the female who has in reality received the worst education, often makes the best figure in society. There are many schools which, (to adopt a simile borrowed from the trades of my own town,) instead of resembling the jeweller's workshop, where sterling gold and real diamonds are polished, are nothing more than gilders, varnishers, and platers, whose object is to give the brightest surface in the shortest time and at the least expense. The paste and the gold look very well, perhaps better than the gem and the gold, because more of it can be obtained for the same sum: but which will wear best, and last the longest? It requires much self-denial, sturdy attachment to solid excellence and nobleness of mind, for a female of few accomplishments, but many virtues, to go home from a company where some gilded, varnished mind has received, for her music or singing, the tribute of admiration, and still to prefer the uncommanding excellence of character, to all

the fascinations of exterior decorations. But look onward in life. See the future career of both. The Syren wins the heart, for which, as a prize, she has sung and played. She marries, and is placed at the head of a rising family. But, alas! the time she should have spent in preparing to be a companion to her husband, a mother to her children, a mistress to her servants, was employed at the piano, in qualifying her to charm the drawing-room circle. She succeeded, and had her reward, but it ended when she became a wife and a mother. She had neither good sense nor information; neither frugality, or order, nor system; neither ability to govern her servants, nor guide her children; her husband sees every thing going wrong, and is dissatisfied; he caught the nightingale to which he listened with such transport in her native bower; but she is now a miserable looking, moping, silent bird in her cage. All is discontent and wretchedness, for both at length find out that she was better qualified to be a public singer than a wife, or a mother, or a mistress.

Far different is the case with the unostentatious individual of real moral worth. She too wins a heart more worth winning than the prize last spoken of. Some congenial mind, looking round for an individual who shall be a helpmate indeed, sees in her good sense and prudence, her well-stored understanding, her sobriety of manners, her sterling piety, the virtues likely to last through life, with foliage ever verdant, fruit ever abundant. They are united: the hopes of lovers, rational, unromantic, founded on kindred minds, and kindred hearts, are realized in all the fond endearments of wedded life. Although the first bloom and freshness of youthful affection fades away, its mellowness still remains, and mutual esteem still continues and grows. Their family increases, over which she presides in the meekness of wisdom, the order of system, and the economy, not of meanness, but of prudence. To her children, whom her husband trusts with confidence to her care, she is the instructor of their minds, the guide of their youth. Their father sees them rising up to prove the wisdom of his choice, when he selected a wife rather for virtues than accomplishments; their mother delights in a husband who is one with her in all her views, and approves of all her doings. They pass through life together, blessing and being blessed; mutual comforters and mutual counsellors, often saying, if not *singing*,

"Domestic happiness, thou only bliss

Of Paradise that hast survived the fall!

Thou art not known where Pleasure is ador'd,

That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist."

How true and how beautiful are the words of Solomon: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hands to the poor: yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."\*

\* Proverbs xxxi.

A beautiful comment on this lovely passage is to be found in the "Friend," by Coleridge; amongst some "*Specimens of Rabbinical wisdom selected from the Mishna.*" It is entitled, "Whoso hath found a virtuous wife, hath a greater treasure than costly pearls."

"Such a treasure had the celebrated teacher RABBI MEIR found. He sat during the whole of one Sabbath-day in the public school, and instructed the people. During his absence from his house, his two sons died, both of them of uncommon beauty, and enlightened in the law. His wife bore them to her bed-chamber, laid them upon the marriage bed, and spread a white covering over their bodies. In the evening Rabbi Meir came home. 'Where are my sons,' he asked, 'that I may give them my blessing?' 'They are gone to the school,' was the answer. 'I repeatedly looked round the school,' he replied, 'and I did not see them there.' She reached to him a goblet: he praised the Lord at the going out of the Sabbath, drank, and again asked, 'Where are my sons, that they too may drink of the cup of blessing?' 'They will not be far off,' she said, and placed food before him that he might eat. He was in a glad-some and genial mood, and when he had said grace after the meal, she thus addressed him:—'Rabbi, permit me one question.' 'Ask it, then, my love,' he replied. 'A few days ago a person entrusted some jewels to my custody, and now he demands them again; should I give them back to him?' 'This is a question,' said Rabbi Meir, 'which my wife should not have thought it necessary to ask. What! wouldst thou hesitate or be reluctant to restore to every one his own?' 'O no,' replied she, 'but I thought it best not to restore them without acquainting thee therewith.' She then led him to their chamber, and stepping to the bed, took the white covering from the dead bodies. 'Ah, my sons! my sons!' thus loudly lamented the father, 'my sons! the light of mine eyes, and the light of my understanding! I was your father, but ye were my teachers in the law!' The mother turned away and wept bitterly. At length she took her husband by the hand, and said, 'Rabbi, didst thou not teach me that one must not be reluctant to restore that which was entrusted to our keeping? See, the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed be the name of the Lord!' echoed Rabbi Meir, 'and blessed be his name for thy sake too; for well is it written, Whoso hath found a virtuous wife, hath a greater treasure than costly pearls: she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.'"

My young female friends, have you no ambition to answer, in future life, these beautiful patterns of female excellence? Have you no desire, that if Providence should place you at the head of a family, you may shine forth in all the mild radiance of domestic feminine excellence? Is there not, as you read, some spirit-stirring desires in your soul? Does not all the glitter of mere external accomplishments fade away into darkness before such effulgent virtue? Does not all the painted insignificance of mere drawing-room charms dwindle into nothing before that solid excellence, which is a

"Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets?"

If so, and ye would thus bless and be blessed, make up your mind deliberately to this opinion, and abide by it, *that what is useful is infinitely to be preferred to what is dazzling: and virtuous excellence to be more ardently coveted than fashionable accomplishments.* A right aim is of unspeakable consequence. Whatever we propose, as the grand paramount object, will form the character. We shall subordinate every thing else to it: and be this *your aim*, to ex-

CEL RATHER IN THE SOLID AND USEFUL ATTAINMENTS, THAN IN EXTERNAL SHOWY DECORATIONS.

Seek a large portion of what is usually denominated GOOD SENSE.

It is very difficult to define what I mean, and perhaps it is not necessary, for every one knows what I intend by this quality. It is that sobriety of character, that quick perception of all the proprieties of life, that nice discernment of what is best to be done in all the ordinary circumstances of human society, which shall enable us to act with credit to ourselves, and comfort to others. It is a thoughtful, cautious way of judging and acting, and is equally opposed to that rashness which acts with precipitancy, and that ignorance which cannot act at all. It is, in fact, *prudence*, accommodating itself to all the relations of life, and ever-varying circumstances of society.

Store your mind with *useful information*.

Read much, and let your reading be of a right kind. Reject with disdain, as you ought, the libel which has been circulated by some against your understanding, that poetry and novels are the books most adapted to the understanding and feelings of young ladies. On this topic I refer you to the chapter on books. I cannot, however, but insert a few additional hints on the subject here.

To assist in the right formation of your character, I very urgently recommend the perusal of *Mrs. Hannah More's "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education."* for although this work is more particularly intended for mothers, it may be read with immense advantage also by daughters. The views of this incomparable woman are so correct, and so enlarged, so accordant with reason, and what is still more important, so harmonious with revelation, that you cannot look up to a better guide. *Gisborne's "Duties of Women"* may also be read with great advantage. *Cox's "Female Biography,"* and *Gibbon's "Lives of Pious Women,"* with *Williams' "Life of Mrs. Savage,"* in this department of reading, will be found interesting books.

*History* should of course occupy much of your time. Here you should be at home. But do not read merely to acquire a mental chronicle of names and dates. To know when such a king reigned, by whom such a country was conquered, or where such a battle was fought, is one of the lowest ends of reading the annals of nations. In *Mrs. More's* work you will find an admirable chapter, "On the religious and moral use of History and Geography," to which, with great pleasure, I refer you.

*Poetry* should be resorted to as a recreation, and a recreation only. On this subject I need not repeat what I have already stated, except to add, that as you have not learned the dead languages, I should advise you to add to the productions of your own national muse, the immortal poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, which may be read, the former in the translations of *Pope* and *Cowper*, and the latter in that of *Dryden*.

*Botany* seems, if not to belong to your sex, to be peculiarly appropriate to it. The elementary treatises of *Chymistry*, such as "Conversations on Chymistry, by a Lady," and *Parke's* Catechism, might be read with great benefit: and indeed the elementary treatises of the whole range of natural philosophy, if you have leisure, should be read.

As you may be one day called to train the minds of your own children, you should not have the philosophy of education to learn when you want it to use; and therefore should now become acquainted with all that is connected with this invaluable science. *Miss Edgeworth's* Treatise on Practical Education,\* with *Mrs. More's* work, will be found most

\* Never was there a writer that better understood



interesting as well as instructive. And if you are willing to go still farther, I would advise you to study Watts' "*Improvement of the Mind*," and his "*Logic*;" Mr. Burder's "*Hints on Mental Culture*;" Dugald Stewart's work on "*The Philosophy of the Human Mind*;" and some parts of Locke's treatise "*On the Human Understanding*." Some of these works will certainly require close application, and hard thinking; but they will amply reward the labor of research; and the powers of the mind, like those of the body, strengthen by exercise. "Serious study serves to harden the mind for more trying conflicts; it lifts the reader from sensation to intellect; it abstracts her from the world and its vanities; it fixes a wandering spirit, and fortifies a weak one; it divorces her from matter, it corrects that spirit of trifling, which she naturally contracts from the frivolous turn of female conversation, and the petty nature of female employments; it concentrates her attention, assists her in a habit of excluding trivial thoughts, and thus even helps to qualify her for religious pursuits."

Thus would I have a female qualified for her station as a wife, mother and mistress: but this is not all; for mental improvement should be associated with a *correct knowledge of household affairs*. She who is to preside over a family, should be most intimately acquainted with every thing that can preserve its order or promote its comfort. That must be a most injudicious mother, who is not anxious to teach a daughter how to manage a family to the greatest advantage; and that must be a weak and silly girl, who is not willing to be taught. *All* the time, therefore, must not be given to books; for *learned ladies*, without neatness, without order, without economy, without frugality,

"May do very well for maidens or aunts,  
But, believe me, they'll never make wives."

A husband's home should be rendered comfortable for himself and his children, or else they are both very likely to wander from home for comfort. Cleanliness, neatness, frugality, order, are all of great importance in the habits of a wife, mother and mistress, for the want of which, no knowledge, however profound or extensive, can be a substitute. It is not at all requisite that a wife should be either an accomplished housemaid, or a perfect cook, but she ought to be able to judge of these qualifications in others: and the want of this ability has led many a man, who was blessed with a *learned* wife, to exclaim, with something between disgust and despair, "I now find, to my cost, that knowledge alone is as poor a qualification for a wife, as personal beauty or external accomplishments."

Before I close this chapter, I must mention one or two dispositions, which young females should assiduously cherish and unostentatiously exhibit.

The first is *filial obedience*; not that this is binding upon daughters only, for what son is he that honoreth not, loveth not, comforteth not, his father

the philosophy of education than this extraordinary woman: all she has written, from the work above mentioned down to "*Early Lessons*," may be read with advantage, not only by those who are to learn, but by those who are to teach. I regret, in common with many others, the exclusion of religion from her productions, and the occasional introduction of irreligious exclamations; but on the general principles of education, and the formation of the character, in every other view of it than in reference to religion, Miss Edgeworth remains unequalled. How deeply to be deplored, that from the works of *such* a writer, the spirit and genius of Christianity should be systematically excluded.

and his mother? Wherever Providence should cast his lot, or in whatever circumstances he should be placed, let him continue in every possible way to promote the happiness of his parents. Young people are but too apt to think, that the obligations to filial piety diminish in number and strength, as years increase. I am afraid that really one of the signs of the times, and it is no bright one, is the decrease of this amiable and lovely virtue. I think I see rising—I wish I may be in error—a spirit of independence, which is aiming to antedate the period of manhood, and to bring as near to fourteen as possible, the time when the yoke of parental control may be thrown off. This is neither for the comfort of the parents, nor the advantage of the children. It is not obedience only that should not be refused; for where this is denied, there can be neither religion nor virtue; but all that public way of showing them honor, and all that private way of promoting their comfort, for which opportunities are constantly presented. There is no period in the life of a father or a mother, when the obligation to be in some measure subject to them, and in all measure to promote their happiness, ceases. It has been brought as an allegation against the *bard*, whom an Englishman might be proud to name, that he was so severe a father, as to have compelled his daughters, after he was blind, to read aloud to him, for his sole pleasure, Greek and Latin authors, of which they did not understand a word. Compelled his daughters!! What daughters must they be who need *compulsion* in such a case!!

The following is the description of a daughter which I have somewhere met with:—"M. E. S. received her unhappy existence at the price of her mother's life, and at the age of seventeen she followed, as the sole mourner, the bier of her remaining parent. From her thirteenth year, she had passed her life at her father's sick bed, the gout having deprived him of the use of his limbs; and beheld the arch of heaven only when she went forth to fetch food or medicines. The discharge of her filial duties occupied the whole of her time and all her thoughts. She was his only nurse, and for the last two years they lived without a servant. She prepared his scanty meal, she bathed his aching limbs, and, though weak and delicate from constant confinement, and the poison of melancholy thoughts, she had acquired an unusual power in her arms, from the habit of lifting her old and suffering father out of and into his bed of pain. Thus passed away her early youth in sorrow; she grew up in tears, a stranger to the amusements of youth, and its more delightful schemes and imaginations. She was not, however, unhappy; she attributed no merit to herself for her virtues; but for that reason were they the more her reward. "The peace which passeth all understanding," disclosed itself in all her looks and movements. It lay on her countenance like a steady unshadowed moonlight; and her voice, which was at once naturally sweet and subtle, came from her like the fine flute tones of a masterly performer, which still floating at some uncertain distance, seem to be created by the player, rather than to proceed from the instrument. If you had listened to it in one of those brief Sabbaths of the soul, when the activity and discursiveness of the thoughts are suspended, and the mind quietly eddies round instead of flowing onward (as at late evening in the spring, I have seen a bat wheel in silent circles round and round a fruit tree in full blossom, in the midst of which, as within a close tent of the purest white, an unseen nightingale was piping its sweetest notes,) in such a mood, you might have half fancied, half felt, that her voice had a separate being of its own—that it was a living something whose mode of existence was for the ear only: so deep was her re-

signation, so entirely had it become the habit of her nature, and in all she did or said so perfectly were her movements, and her utterance without effort, and without the appearance of effort. Her dying father's last words, addressed to the clergyman who attended him, were his grateful testimony, that during his long and sore trial, his good *Maria* had behaved to him like an angel; that the most disagreeable offices, and the least suited to her age and sex, had never drawn an unwilling look from her; and that whenever his eye had met hers, he had been sure to see in it either the tear of pity, or the sudden smile expressive of her affection and wish to cheer him. "God," said he "will reward the good girl for all her long dutifulness to me!" He departed during the inward prayer, which followed these his last words. His wish will be fulfilled in eternity!"

What daughter can read this and not admire, and, if need be, imitate the conduct of *Maria*?—Few are called to these self-denying acts of filial piety; but who would not do all they could to sweeten, as far as may be, the dregs of life to an aged mother or a blind father? It has been observed that a good daughter generally makes an exemplary wife and mother.

*SENSIBILITY, when blended with a sound judgment, and guided in its exercises by good sense and prudence, is a lovely ornament of the female character.* By sensibility, I mean a susceptibility of having emotion excited by external objects; a habit of mind, in which the affections are easily moved, by objects calculated and worthy to produce feeling. Of course, this is an *evil* or an *excellence*, according as it is united with other mental habits. An excess of sensibility, is one of the most injurious ingredients which can enter into the formation of character.—Where it is united with a weak judgment, and a wild imagination, it exposes its possessor to the greatest possible dangers, and opens in her own bosom a perpetual source of vexation, misery, and self-torment. If we were to trace to their source many of those quarrels which have alienated friends, and made irreconcilable enemies; those mortifications of pride and vanity, which have ended in lunacy; those hasty and imprudent marriages which have terminated in universal wretchedness; those acts of profligacy, suicide, and even murder, which have stained the annals of mankind; we should find the germ of all these mischiefs in an excess of morbid sensibility. Feeling, like fire, is a good servant, but a bad master: a source of comfort and a means of usefulness, if well governed; but if left to rage without control, an engine of destruction, and a cause of misery. Every heart should have an altar, on which this fire should be perpetually kept burning, but then prudence should ever be on the watch, lest it should consume the temple.

Young females are in imminent danger of being led away by the representation, that an unfeeling woman, though she be pure as a statue of Parian marble, yet withal, if she be as cold, is a most unlovely character. This I admit, and therefore I class a well-governed sensibility, amongst the decorations of the female character. But, then, the tendency of this remark is certainly mischievous, since, according to the spirit in which it is usually both made and received, it means, that an *excess* of feeling, rather adorns than injures the character. It will be found, generally speaking, that young people rather force the growth, than check the luxuriance of their feelings: which is just in the inverted order of nature, since the affections generally grow without culture, the judgment scarcely ever. The voice of flattery, also, is all on the side of feeling. A warm-hearted girl carried away by her feelings, and misled by a wild and ardent imagination, will

find many more admirers than the sensible, prudent, and reserved one; and for this plain reason, because there are more fools in the world than wise men.—Follow out the history of the two characters. It is the end that proves all.

Imprudent attachments, rash friendships, misdirected anxieties, eccentric charities, fickle schemes, groundless anticipations, mortifying disappointments, harassing litigations, with innumerable other evils, come in the train of excessive and ungoverned sensibility. Let young women therefore remember, that the understanding is the queen amongst the faculties of the soul, beneath whose despotic sway, the imagination and affections may be as active and as ardent as they please, so that they never offend against the laws of their sovereign.

With these limitations, I will admit that sensibility is an ornament of female character. A cold, unfeeling, heartless woman, who has no tear for sorrow, no smile for excellence; who has no power but that of niggardly calculation, and no emotions, but those which by a sort of centripetal force, are all drawn to self as the centre of gravity, is a libel upon her sex. She may have prudence, but it is likely to degenerate into cunning; frugality, but it will in all probability soon become avarice; caution, but it will be changed into suspicion; intellect, but it will be proud, censorious and cynical. Pure sensibility is the soil in which the generous affections grow; it cherishes that mercy which is full of good fruits; gives birth to all the enterprises of benevolence, and when touched and purified with a "live coal from the altar," will give a keener taste for the spirit of religion, a richer enjoyment of its privileges, and a quicker zeal in discharging its duties: but then it must be feeling associated with principle, and guided in all its exercises by a sound judgment.

*A retiredness of disposition* is also an exquisite ornament of the female character. Even the most distant approach to whatever is forward in manner, and vain in conversation, should be most studiously avoided. Delicate reserve, without awkward bashfulness, is no small part of the loveliness of every young female, especially in all her conduct *towards the opposite sex*. A lady who takes pains to be noticed, generally gains her object without its reward; for she is noticed, but at the same time she is despised. Nothing can be more disgusting, than a bold obtrusiveness of manners in a female, except it be that affectation of retiredness which retreats only to be followed. Flippancy and pertness are sometimes mistakenly substituted by their possessor, for smartness and cleverness. These latter qualities never look well when they are studied: they are never tolerable, but when they are natural; and are amongst the last things which we should seek to *acquire*: for when obtained in this way, they appear no better than ornaments stuck on, instead of being wrought in. I am not contending against that *ease of manners*, which the most retiring female may and should adopt, even in the company of gentlemen; that artless and elegant freedom, which is compatible with the most delicate reserve; but merely that *thirsting mode of address*, which determines to attract attention.

A love of display, has been thought to be amongst the blemishes which usually attach to female character in general. I do not now refer to the petty concerns of dress, for this is truly pitiable; and an individual silly enough to indulge such a butterfly, peacock taste as this, is too weak to afford any rational hopes of having her follies corrected. Arguments are lost upon that little mind, whose ambition cannot comprehend, or value, or covet, a distinction, of greater worth than a richer silk, a more graceful plume, or a more modern fashion. This Lilliputian



heroine, armed at every point with feathers, flowers, and ribbons; supported by all her auxiliary forces of plumassieurs, friseurs, milliners, mantuamakers, perfumers, &c. &c. &c., contending for the palm of victory on the arena of fashion, must be left to her fate to conquer or to fall; I have no concern with her. But there is vanity of another kind, against which I would caution young females, and this is, a fondness for exhibiting their fashionable accomplishments, or mental acquirements. Pedantry in a man is bad enough, but in a woman is still worse. Few things are more offensive than to see a female laboring to the uttermost to convince a company that she has received a good intellectual education, has improved her advantages, and is really a sensible, clever woman; at one time almost vociferating about nitrogen, oxygen, and caloric; then boasting her acquaintance with some of the greatest geniuses of the age; and last of all entering into a stormy debate on politics or finance.

Now observe, I am not contending against a woman's acquainting herself with these subjects, for I reject with indignation the calumny that the female mind is unequal to the profoundest subjects of human investigation, or should be restricted in its studies to more feminine pursuits; much less am I anxious to exclude the stores of female intellect, and the music of female tongues from the feast of reason and the flow of soul. No. Too long have the softer sex been insulted by the supposition, that they are incapable of joining or enriching the mental communion, and conversation of the drawing-room. I most unequivocally, unhesitatingly say, that they have a much smaller share of conversational intercourse than their natural talents, and their acquired information, entitle them to.

All I am contending against is, that *love of display*, which leads some to force themselves upon the attention of a company: which is not contented with sharing, but is ambitious of monopolizing the time and opportunities of rational discourse. Some silversmiths and jewellers, who wish to attract public attention, make a splendid display of gems and jewels in their window; but their window contains their whole stock, they have no store besides: there are others who, making all proper exhibition, can conduct their customers from room to room within, each filled with stores of inestimable value. Not unlike the former, some persons make a grand display in conversation, but their tongue, like the shop window, exhibits all they possess, they have very little besides in the mind; but there are others, who like the latter tradesman, are not deficient in respectable display, but then, besides the ideas which they exhibit in conversation, they have a valuable stock of knowledge in the mind.

To conclude this long chapter, I must again remind you, that True Religion is the deep basis of excellence; Sound Morality its lofty superstructure; Good Sense, General Knowledge, Correct feeling, the necessary furniture of the fabric; and unaffected Modesty and Fashionable Accomplishments, its elegant decorations.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ON PRUDENCE, MODESTY, AND COURTESY.

RELIGION, my dear children, is the first and the principal thing which I am anxious that you should possess, but it is not the *only* one. It is the basis of excellence, which should be well laid, to bear whatsoever things are lovely, or of good report; or, changing the metaphor, it is that firmness and solidity of character, which, like the substance of the

diamond, best prepares it to receive a polish, and is rendered more beautiful and more valuable by being polished. The religion of some persons is like the gem in the rough, the excellence of which is concealed and disfigured by many foreign adhesions: there is real principle at the bottom, but it is so surrounded by imprudence, rudeness, ignorance, slovenliness, and other bad qualities, that it requires a skillful eye to discern its worth. I most earnestly admonish you, therefore, to add to your piety

#### 1. PRUDENCE.

By prudence, I mean a calculating and deliberative turn of mind, as to the tendency of our words and actions; coupled with a desire so to speak and act, as to bring no inconvenience either upon ourselves or others. It is that right application of knowledge to practice, which constitutes wisdom. A person may have an immensity of knowledge, with scarcely a grain of prudence; and, notwithstanding the stores of his understanding, may always have his peace destroyed. I am aware that prudence is too often regarded by the ardent and sanguine minds of the young, as a cold and heartless virtue; a sort of November flower, which, though regular in its growth, and mild in color, has neither glow nor fragrance, but stands alone in the garden as the memorial of departed summer, the harbinger of approaching winter. Youth are captivated by what is frank and generous, even when it leads to "Headlong Hall." If by prudence I mean mere cold reserve, or that selfishness which chills the ardor of kindness, and freezes the spring of benevolence in the heart, you might well beware of a disposition so unlovely: but when I simply mean a habit of thinking before you speak or act, lest your thoughtlessness should prove injurious to the comfort of your own mind, or the comfort of others; when I only require you to exercise that judgment upon the tendencies of your conduct, which is one of the chief distinctions of a rational creature; when I merely call upon you to put forth the power of foresight which God has planted in your nature, surely, surely, there is nothing unsuited either to your age, or to the most generous mind in this. That rashness of speech, or conduct, which is always involving a person, and his friends too, in difficulties, inconveniences, and embarrassments, has little to commend itself to your admiration, with whatever good temper or gay fancy it may happen to be associated; society must be a chaos, if all its members were formed upon this model.

You must have seen, my dear children, the mischiefs which imprudence has brought in its train. What strifes have been engendered by a rash, unguarded use of the tongue, by persons giving a hasty opinion of the character, conduct, and motives of others: I believe that a moiety of the quarrels which exist, may be traced up to this source. If, then, you would journey along through life in honor and in peace, I cannot give you a more important piece of advice than this: "Be very cautious how you give an opinion of the character, conduct, or motives of others. Be slow to speak. For one that has repented of having held his tongue, myriads have bitterly grieved over the imprudent use of it. Remember what Solomon says, "A prating fool shall fall;" and almost all fools do prate: silence is generally a characteristic of wise men, especially in reference to the concerns of others. I know not a surer mark of a little, empty mind, than to be always talking about our neighbor's affairs. A collector of rags is a much more honorable, and certainly a far more useful member of society, than a collector and vender of tales.

But let your prudence manifest itself in reference to your *conduct*, as well as your *words*. Never act till you have deliberated. Some persons invert the

order of nature and reason; they act first and think afterwards; and the consequence very generally proves, as might have been expected, that *first impressions are fallacious guides to wise actions*. I scarcely know any thing against which young people should be more seriously warned, than this habit of acting from first impressions; nor any thing which they should be more earnestly advised to cultivate, than an almost instinctive propensity to look forward, and to consider the probable results of any proposed line of conduct. This calculating temper is to be preferred far above the knowledge of the rash; for it will preserve both the peace of its possessor, and that of others, who have to do with him. Multitudes, by a want of prudence in the management of their pecuniary affairs, have ruined themselves, plunged their families into want, and involved their friends in calamity. They have engaged in one rash speculation after another, and formed one unpromising connection after another; scarcely recovered from the complicated mischief of one, before they were involved in the embarrassment of the next, till the final catastrophe came in all its terrors, which might have been foreseen, and was predicted by every one except the rash projector himself. When we consider that in such cases a man cannot suffer alone, but must extend the effects of his conduct to others, prudence will appear to be not only an ornament of character, but a virtue; and imprudence not only near to immorality, but a part of it.

Begin life, then, with a systematic effort to cultivate a habit of sound discretion, and prudent foresight; and for this purpose, observe attentively the conduct of others; profit both by the sufferings of the rash, and the tranquillity of the cautious: render also your own past experience subservient to future improvement. I knew a person, who having imprudently engaged in a litigation, which cost him a considerable sum of money to compromise, made the following entry in his diary:—"March—Paid this day, one hundred and fifty pounds for wisdom." Experience, it has been said, keeps a dear school: but some people will not learn in any other: and they are fortunate who improve in this. I most emphatically recommend to you the diligent study of the book of Proverbs, as containing more sound wisdom, more prudential maxims for the right government of our affairs in this life, than all other books in the world put together.

2. **MODESTY** is a very bright ornament of the youthful character: without it, the greatest attainments and the strongest genius cannot fail to create disgust.

*Conceit* I have already stated to be one of the obstacles to youthful piety, and even where its mischief does not operate so fatally as this, it certainly disfigures religion. Young people should consider, that even if they have much knowledge, they have but little experience. Every thing pert, flippant, obtrusive, and self-confident, is highly unbecoming in those who, whatever they may know of scholastic literature, have but little acquaintance either with themselves or mankind. Strong intellect and great attainments will soon commend themselves, without any pains being taken to force them upon our attention; and they never appear so lovely, nor attract us with such force, as when seen through a veil of modesty. Like the coy violet, which discloses its retreat rather by its fragrance than by its color, so youthful excellence should modestly leave others to find out its concealment, and not ostentatiously thrust itself on public attention.

I do not wish to inculcate that diffidence which makes young people bashful and timid, even to awkwardness and sheepishness; which prevents even the laudable exertions of their powers; and

which is not only distressing to the subjects of it themselves, but painful to others. Nothing can be further from my views than this; for it is a positive misery to be able neither to speak nor be spoken to, without blushing to the ears and trembling to the very toes: but there is a wide difference between this bashfulness and genuine modesty. *Modesty* is a habit, or principle of the mind, which leads a man to form an humble estimate of himself, and prevents him from ostentatiously displaying his attainments before others: *bashfulness* is merely a state of timid feeling: *modesty* discovers itself in the absence of every thing assuming, whether in look, word, or action; *bashfulness* betrays itself by a downcast look, a blushing cheek, a timid air: *modesty*, though opposed to assurance, is not incompatible with an unpretending confidence in ourselves; *bashfulness* altogether unmans us, and disqualifies us for our duty.

Modesty shields a man from the mortifications and disappointments which assail the self-conceited man from every quarter. A pert, pragmatical youth, fond alike of exalting himself, and depreciating others, soon becomes a mark for the arrows of ridicule, censure, and anger; while a modest person conciliates the esteem of all, not excepting his enemies and rivals, he disarms the resentment even of those who feel themselves most injured by his superiority, he makes all pleased with him by making them at ease with themselves; he is at once esteemed for his talents, and loved for the humility with which he bears them. Arrogance can neither supply the want of talents, nor adorn them where they are possessed.

It is of importance to cultivate modesty in youth, for if wanting then, it is seldom obtained afterwards. Nothing grows faster than conceitedness; and as no weed in the human heart becomes more rank, so none is more offensive than this. I have known individuals, who, by their extensive information and strong sense, might have become the delight of every circle in which they moved, have yet by their positive, dogmatical, and overbearing temper, inspired such a dread, that their arrival in company has thrown a cloud-shadow on every countenance. A *disputatious temper* is exceedingly to be dreaded. Nothing can be more opposed to the peace of society than that disposition, which converts every room into the arena of controversy, every company into competitors, and every diversity of sentiment into an apple of discord. There are times when a man must state and defend his own opinions; when he cannot be silent; when he must not only defend, but attack; but even in such cases he should avoid every thing dogmatical and overbearing; all insulting contempt of others, and all that most irritating treatment, which makes an antagonist appear like a fool. Our arguments should not fall and explode with the noise and violence of thunderbolts, but insinuate themselves like the light or the dew of heaven.

Take it, my dear children, as the result of nearly a quarter of a century's observation and experience, in no contracted circle of human life, that verbal controversy in company produces very little good and a great deal of harm. In such a situation men contend for victory, not for truth; and each goes into a war of words, determined to avoid, if possible, the disgrace of a public defeat.

3. **COURTESY** is a most valuable disposition.

This is enjoined, not only by those authors who are the legislators of the drawing-room, but by him who has published laws for the government of the heart. "Be courteous," saith the word of God.—By courtesy I mean that benevolence of disposition which displays itself in a constant aim to please those with whom we associate, both by the matter



and manner of our actions; in little things as well as great ones. Crabbe, in his English Synonyms, has given us this definition of courtesy and complaisance:—"Courteous in one respect comprehends more than *complaisant*; it includes the manner, as well as the action; it is, properly speaking, polished complaisance: on the other hand, *complaisance* includes more of the disposition in it than *courteousness*; it has less of the polish, but more of the reality of kindness. *Courteousness* displays itself in the address and the manners, *complaisance* in direct good offices; *courteousness* is most suitable for strangers; *complaisance* for friends, or the nearest relatives;" among well-bred men, and men of rank, it is an invariable rule to address each other *courteously* on all occasions whenever they meet, whether acquainted or otherwise; there is a degree of *complaisance* due between husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and members of the same family, which cannot be neglected without endangering the harmony of their intercourse. It is my earnest desire, my children, that you should be both courteous and complaisant. The union of both these constitutes true politeness. I do not wish you to study the works of Lord Chesterfield, which have been aptly described as teaching the manners of a dancing master, and the morals of a prostitute; but *true* politeness, such as consists of the union I have already mentioned, is excellence carried to its highest polish.

Life is made up for the most part of petty transactions, and is chequered more by the light and shade of minor pains and pleasures, than by the deeper hues of miseries and ecstasies. Occasions rarely happen, when we can relieve or be relieved by the more splendid efforts of benevolence; while not a day, scarcely an hour, passes without an opportunity of giving, or receiving gratifications of complaisance. "Politeness," says our great Essayist, in the *Rambler*, "is one of those advantages which we never estimate rightly but by the inconvenience of its loss. Its influence upon the manners is constant and uniform, so that, like an equal motion, it escapes perception. The circumstances of every action are so adjusted to each other, that we do not see where any error could have been committed, and rather acquiesce in its propriety, than admire its exactness."

"Wisdom and virtue are by no means sufficient without the supplemental laws of good breeding, to secure freedom from degenerating into rudeness, or self-esteem from swelling into insolence; a thousand incivilities may be committed, and a thousand offices neglected, without any remorse of conscience, or reproach from reason."

"The true effect of genuine politeness seems to be rather ease than pleasure. The power of delighting must be conferred by nature, and cannot be delivered by precept, or obtained by imitation; but though it be the privilege of few to ravish, and to charm, every man may hope, by rules and caution, not to give pain, and may therefore, by the help of good breeding, enjoy the kindness of mankind, though he should have no claim to higher distinctions."

The universal axiom in which all complaisance is included, and from which flow all the formalities that custom has established in civilized nations, is, *That no man shall give any preference to himself*: a rule so comprehensive and certain, that perhaps it is not easy for the mind to imagine an incivility, without supposing it to be broken.

Think not, however, that politeness is only to be acquired by frequenting what is called fashionable company, and places of public entertainment: complaisance is the offspring of benevolence, the tiny daughter of kindness; and this may be found in the

cottage, where I have often seen as much real courtesy as was ever found in a mansion. Hear the testimony of Dr. Johnson on this subject.

"I have indeed not found, among any part of mankind, less real and rational complaisance, than among those who have passed their time in paying and receiving visits, in frequenting public entertainments, in studying the exact measures of ceremony, and in watching all the variations of fashionable courtesy."

"They know, indeed, at what hour they may be at the door of an acquaintance, how many steps they must attend him towards the gate, and what interval should pass before his visit is returned; but seldom extend their care beyond the exterior and unessential parts of civility, nor refuse their own vanity any gratification, however expensive to the quiet of another."

By a neglect of complaisance, many persons of substantial excellence have deprived their virtues of much of their lustre, and themselves of much kindness; of whom it is very common to have it said—"Yes, he is a good man, but I cannot like him." Surely such persons, by an ill economy of reputation, have sold the attachment of the world at too low a price, since they have lost one of the rewards of virtue, without even gaining the profits of wickedness.\*

4. *On admiration of the characters of others*, I think it important to say a few things. To observe, admire, and imitate the excellences of those around us, is no less our duty than our interest. It is a just tribute to *their* moral worth, and the means of promoting *our* own. It is of great consequence, however, that our admiration of character should be well directed; for as we naturally imitate what we admire, we should take care that we are attracted and charmed only by *real* excellence. Do not be led astray, my children, by a mere speciousness, or showiness of character. Let nothing be regarded by you as worthy your admiration, which is not in connection with moral worth. Courage, frankness, heroism, politeness, intellect, are all valuable dispositions of mind; but unless they are united with genuine principle and true integrity, they only render their possessor more dangerous, and invest him with greater power to do mischief. Suffer not your imagination to be captivated by the dazzling properties of a character, of which the substantial parts are not approved by your judgment; nothing is excellent which is not morally so. The polished rake, the generous profligate, the witty and intelligent skeptic, are to be shunned as serpents, whose variegated and beautiful skin should have no power to reconcile us to their venom. You may be charged with want of taste, or coldness of heart, for withholding your approbation; but it is a far sublimer attainment, and certainly a more difficult one, to have a taste and ardor only in the cause of holiness. Be cautious to examine every character which is presented to you for admiration, to penetrate the varnish of exterior accomplishments; and if you find nothing of genuine integrity beneath, withhold the tribute of your approbation, regardless of the sneers of those shallow minds, who have neither the power to try the things that differ, nor the virtue to approve only such as are excellent.

It is a very important hint to give to young peo-

\* See the *Rambler*, Nos. 56 and 98. The British Essayists, especially the *Spectator*, *Rambler*, and *Idler*, though not always strictly Scriptural in their views of human nature, and moral obligation, contain an inexhaustible fund of entertainment and instruction, conveyed in a most fascinating style of composition. Who need covet a novel that can converse with Addison and Johnson?

ple, just setting out in life, to analyze character before they admire it; remembering that, to borrow an illusion from chymistry, a deadly poison may be held in solution by the most beautifully-colored liquid which the eye can behold.

5. *An extreme dread of singularity*, arising out of a morbid sensibility to shame, is a dangerous disposition of mind to which young people are very liable.

There are some who are so ambitious to be thought originals, that they affect distinction in folly, or even in vice: they can even bear to be laughed at, if it may be admitted that they are without a prototype; and are content to be persecuted, provided it be for the sake of their originality. These martyrs to strangeness are in one extremity of character, of which the other is that great dread of being ridiculed as singular, which tries a man's attachment, even to the cause of virtue. There are some so acutely, so morbidly sensible to the least sneer, that they are put in dreadful peril of forsaking the cause of righteousness and morality, rather than take up the cross and follow it. I have already in part considered this, and stated it to be one of the obstacles to early piety; but it not only obstructs the entrance, but the subsequent path of piety, and should therefore be most vigorously opposed by all who are subject to its influence. A sense of shame, when felt in reference to what is wrong, is one of the guardians of virtue; in this meaning of the phrase, it can never be too acute, nor can it be too delicately susceptible of impression. When one has ceased to be ashamed of doing what is wrong, and the last blush with which a tender conscience once suffused the countenance has vanished, the progress of sin is nearly completed, and the sinner may be considered as near the end of his career. But when a person is so morbidly sensible to ridicule, that he shrinks from it, even in the performance of that which is right, he not only lets down his dignity, but endangers his principles.

There is something noble and heroic in that disposition, which can dare to be singular in the cause of religion and morality; which, with a mind conscious of doing right, can fight single handed, the battles of the Lord, against the host of scorers by which it may be surrounded. It is not a part of virtue to be indifferent to the opinion of others, except that opinion be opposed to the principles of truth and holiness, then it is the very height of virtue to act above it, and against it.

Ridicule is certainly not the test of truth, but it is one of the most fiery ordeals of that courage by which the truth is professed and supported. Many have been vanquished by scorn, who were invulnerable to rage; for men in general would much rather have their hearts reproached than their heads, deeming it less disgraceful to be weak in virtue than deficient in intellect. Strange perversion! the effect of that pride which, being injected into our nature by the venom of the serpent in paradise, still continues to infect and destroy us. Let us oppose this working of evil within us, and crucify this affection and lust of the flesh. Let no ridicule deter us from doing what is right, or avoiding what is wrong. Let us emulate the sublime example of the apostle, who exclaimed, "We are fools for Christ's sake." This is the noblest effort of human courage, the loftiest achievement of virtue, to be "faithful found amongst the faithless," and willing to bear any contumely rather than act in opposition to the convictions of our judgment, and the dictates of our conscience. Infinitely to be preferred is it, to be scorned for doing what is right than applauded for doing what is wrong. From the laughter of the wicked you may find a refuge in the approbation of your conscience, and the smile of your God; but in

what a miserable situation is that poor cowardly wretch, whose dread of singularity has led him to sacrifice the convictions of his conscience, and who has nothing to comfort him under the frown of Deity, but the applause of fools.

Neither in little things, nor in great ones, suffer your dread of singularity to turn your feet from the path of integrity. Arm yourselves with this mind, to do what is right, though you can find neither companion nor follower.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ON REDEEMING TIME.

It was a very important admonition which St. Paul delivered to the Ephesian church,—*"Redeeming the time because the days are evil."* The context in which it stands is equally striking: he had just admonished those to whom he wrote, not to walk as fools; thus implying, that a man can give no greater proof of folly, nor more effectually act the part of a fool, than to waste his time: while, on the other hand, a just appreciation and a right improvement of time, is amongst the brightest displays of true wisdom.

Seneca has somewhere observed, that we are all of us complaining of the shortness of time, and yet have much more than we know what to do with.—We are always mourning that our days are few, and yet acting as though there would be no end of them. This plainly proves, that we neither value time correctly, nor improve it diligently. The late Rev. Henry Martyn was known at the University by the designation of "The man who never wasted an hour." Nothing can better explain what I mean by improving time; it is never wasting it, but always appropriating it to some useful purpose. Many considerations, my children, urge this upon us.

*It is the most precious thing in the world.* In the bestowment of it, God differs from the manner in which he distributes most of his other gifts: in the latter he is profuse, in the former parsimonious. He can, of course, give us but a moment at a time, but that he does without ever promising another; as if to teach us highly to value, and diligently to improve the present moment, by the consideration that, for aught we know, it may be the last.

*Time, when once gone, never returns.* Where is yesterday?—"With the ages beyond the flood," and we could as soon hope to bring back one, as the other. We talk of fetching up a lost hour; but the thing is impossible. A moment once lost is lost for ever; we could as rationally set out to find a sound that had expired in air, as to find a lost moment. We may as well attempt to crowd two hours into the duration of one, as the employment of two hours into one: for, in reality, what we do in any given portion of time, might have been done in it, although we had not wasted the preceding one.

*How much is there of our time, which can be applied to no purpose, except preparing us for improving other portions of our existence.* How much goes away in sleep, and in all the other demands of nature, for its refreshment and invigoration: this is not lost, if the subsequent period be rightly applied and diligently employed, any more than the time spent in oiling the wheels of a carriage, impedes the journey, because it goes the faster afterwards. But then, if we sleep at night, it is that we might be busy in the day; if we eat and drink, it is that we might be better able to work; and certainly a recollection of the great portion of our time that is necessary for refreshment and repose, should be a stimulus to us to employ the remainder with the greater diligence.



We should regard it as an infirmity of nature, that so much sleep, and time for eating and drinking, is necessary, and endeavor, by diligence in our waking, working hours, to improve the surplus.

Then add to this the portions of time which are irresistibly engrossed by the tyranny of custom; all that passes in regulating the superficial decorations of life, or is given up in the reciprocations of civility to the disposal of others, all that is torn from us by the violence of disease, or stolen imperceptibly away by lassitude and languor; that large portion which is spent amidst the toys of childhood, and afterwards amidst the imbecility of old age: I say, add up these things, and when you have subtracted the amount from the gross sum of man's life, how small is the remainder! Even the active and busy part of mankind apply very little more than a third part of their existence to any valuable purpose. By this mode of calculation, the old man of eighty has lived but little more than twenty-six years; and the man of forty but little more than thirteen. A most cogent reason for not wasting an hour.

We should never forget, *that our time is amongst the talents for which we must give account at the bar of God.* Time, being not the least precious of these, will be required with a strictness proportionate to its value. Let us tremble at this idea, as well we may. We must be tried, not only for what we have done, but for what we had time to do, yet neglected to do it: not only for the hours spent in sin, but for those wasted in idleness. Let us beware of that mode of spending time, which some call killing it, "for this murder, like others, will not always be concealed; the hours destroyed in secret, will appear when we least expect it, to the unspeakable terror and amazement of our souls; they arise from the dead, and fly away to heaven, whither they might have carried better news, and there tell sad tales of us, which we shall be sure to hear of again, when we hold up our hands at the bar, and they shall come as so many swift witnesses against us."

It might stir us up to diligence in the improvement of our time, to think how much of it has been *already misspent.* What days, and weeks, and months, and years, have already been utterly wasted, or exhausted upon trifles totally unworthy of them. They are gone, and nothing remains of them but the guilt of having misimproved them. We cannot call them back if we would; and all we can do, is to let their memorial, like the recollection of any other dead friends, whom we treated improperly while they lived, lead us to value more highly, and to use more kindly, those that remain.

*How much of our time is already gone, and how little may be yet to come.* The sands of our glass may be almost out, without the possibility of having it turned. Death may be at the door. When you begin a day you know not that you shall end it; when you lie down that you shall rise up; when you go from home that you shall ever return. For what is your life; it is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth; a bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts. We know not in any one period of our existence, but that it may be the last. Surely, surely, we should then improve our time, when we may be holding, for aught we know, the last portion of it in our hands. With the absolute certainty of a life as long as Methuselah's not an hour should be wasted; how much less, when we know not that there is a day in reversion for us!

*But what are the purposes for which time should be redeemed?*

For the *salvation of the soul*, the business of religion, the preparation for eternity. You are immortal creatures, my children, and must live for ever in torment or in bliss; and certainly you cannot be forming a right estimate of the value of time, nor

be rightly employing it, if the soul be forgotten, salvation neglected, and eternity left out of consideration. "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" A man may attain to the science of Newton, the genius of Milton, the learning of Bentley, the wealth of Cræsus, and the fame of Alexander; but if the salvation of the soul be neglected, he will through eternity confess and curse his folly, in losing his time. Our great business in this world is to prepare for the next; time is capital given us to trade with for eternity; and that man who goes from the stage of life without having attended supremely to the great business of religion, will appear to the inhabitants of the unseen world, as well as to himself, an object of amazement for his unparalleled folly in wasting his time upon matters, which, compared with eternal happiness, were utterly insignificant.

We must redeem time for the *pursuit of business*, for it is ordained that men shall gain their bread by the sweat of their brow: for the *improvement of our mind*, so far as circumstances will allow, in all useful knowledge; and for the *exercise of benevolence.* These are the objects which we must ever keep in view, as the claimants who prefer their demands for the years and the days which God hath given us upon earth.

And from *what* is our time to be redeemed?—From *sloth.* How much of it is consumed by this lazy, slumbering monster! How many golden hours are wasted upon the downy pillow! Late rising is the enemy of piety, of knowledge, of health, of affluence; and the cause of ignorance, irreligion, and poverty. Shall religion, wisdom, benevolence, my dear children, be found knocking at your chamber door, morning after morning, exclaiming,—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise!" and receive no other answer than, "a little more sleep, and a little more slumber." A habit of early rising has, in many cases, been a fortune to the pocket, and, in many more, a fortune to the mind. Reckoning that a day consists of ten hours active employment, the difference of life between an individual who rises at six o'clock, and another who rises at eight, is, in the term of sixty years, no less than equal to twelve years, and those the best years of a man's existence. There is in this calculation that which proves late rising not only to be a loss, but a *crime.* It is so much deducted from a man's existence, and actually given to his grave.

Many of the most distinguished characters in the literary world owe their eminence to early rising. It is recorded of *Buffon*, the celebrated natural historian, that wishing to acquire the habit of early rising, both from his love of knowledge and of fame, he promised his servant half a crown for every morning on which he should prevail upon him to leave his bed by a given time. The servant went most resolutely to work, under a commission that authorized him to drag *Buffon*, if necessary, out of bed; and in spite of threats and ill-usage, which he often had to endure from his somnolent master, succeeded in getting him from his chamber by the stipulated hour. And *Buffon* informs us, that to the unwearied perseverance of his servant, the world is indebted for his work on Natural History.

It is a most injurious practice to invert the order of nature, and sit up late instead of rising early.—Nocturnal studies rapidly undermine the strongest constitution. Dr. Owen, a name dear to all who love sterling piety and profound theological learning, used to say, when suffering through his excessive application to study, "That he would gladly give up all the knowledge he had acquired after ten o'clock at night, if he could recover all the strength he had lost by studies carried on after that hour."

"Let your sleep, then, be necessary and healthful, not idle and expensive of time, beyond the needs and conveniences of nature; and sometimes be curious to see the preparation which the sun makes, when he is coming forth from his chambers in the east."

Redeem time, *from the vain pursuits of personal decoration and dress.* This applies chiefly, though not exclusively, to the softer sex. It is shocking to think how much precious time is wasted at the toilette, in the silly ambition of rivalling the butterfly, the ostrich, and the peacock. What a reproach to a rational creature is it to neglect the improvement of the mind for the adornings of the body; this is like painting the outside of the house, and trailing over it the myrtle, the rose, and the jessamine, while the interior is left to be dark, damp, inconvenient, and filthy.

*Unprofitable reading* is another consumer of time which must be avoided. *Worldly amusements and parties of pleasure*, are also injurious. I do not by this mean to condemn the occasional intercourse of friends in the social circle, where the civilities of life are given and received, the ties of friendship strengthened, and the mind recreated, without any injury being done to its spiritual or moral interests. But the theatre, the card-table, the billiard-table, are all to be avoided as vile thieves, which steal our time and hurt our souls. Pleasure parties in general are to be watched with care, and resorted to but seldom, for they seldom pay for the time that is spent. "There are a multitude of people in the world, who, being idle themselves, do their best endeavors to make others so; in which work, partly through a disposition in those others to be made so, and partly through a fear and false shame, which hinders them from fraying away such birds of prey, they are too often suffered to succeed. An assembly of such persons can be compared only to a slaughter-house, where the precious hours, and often the characters of all their friends and acquaintance, are butchered without mercy."

We must redeem time from *the trifling conversation and gossip of idle companions*: "for no man," says Jeremy Taylor, "can be provident of his time, that is not prudent in the choice of his company; and if one of the speakers be vain, tedious, and trifling, he that hears and he that answers, are equal losers in their time." The Idler says, "that there are always some drones in society who make much noise, but no honey." We should avoid all those who talk much, but say little, and watch against persons whose conversation is like the buzz of moths and caterpillars, not only disagreeable, but carrying on a system of spoliation; and who eat into an hour before we are aware that the mischief is commenced. Such persons should consider, that in consuming a man's time, they are committing a felony upon his property, for time is a part of his capital. And all others should retire from such persons, for idleness is contagious.

If you would redeem the time, you should not only avoid absolute idleness, or doing nothing, but a *slow and sauntering habit of doing any thing.* To use an old proverb, "We ought not, I admit, to make greater haste than good speed." There are some persons who are always in a hurry, and all they do bears marks of haste. Every thing is half done, or ill done. But there is a wide difference between habits of despatch, and bustling hurry. A thing is not better done for having twice as much time consumed upon it as it needs. There are individuals who seem always to creep to an engagement and always to slumber over it. As it respects general habits, a parent can scarcely teach a child a more valuable art than *despatch without bustle*; nor can any one that values his time, cultivate a more desirable one for himself.

*Order and punctuality* are essential to a right improvement of time. I mention these things together because they are so closely connected, and have such a mutual influence on each other. One, indeed, is the order of place, the other is the order of time. The best, and indeed the only rules, which any man can with propriety prescribe for himself, are these: "A time for every thing, and every thing in its time; a place for every thing, and every thing in its place." A habit of order may be fairly said to lengthen a man's life, not by multiplying its hours, but by enabling him more advantageously to employ them. Disorderly habits are perpetually wasting our time. When a person has no one place for any one thing, but lays every thing by just wherever he may happen to be, he is sure to spend his life in confusion. He never knows where to find what he wants. Let such a person conceive what an amount of time would be made up by all the minutes and hours which he has employed during his life in looking for misplaced articles; to say nothing of the mortification he has endured, and the inconvenience in which others have been involved. In business, order is property, and every tradesman deficient in this virtue, ought, in taking stock, to have this item on the loss side of the balance-sheet, "So much loss for want of order." And as disorderly habits waste our time, they are not only improper, but *actually sinful*.

*Punctuality* is another habit very important to a right improvement of time. Fix your time, and then keep it. Perhaps you know some persons who are always behind hand. The clock is to them an article without use; they do all things as if by whim or impulse. They are thus mischief-makers without malice; and as far as in them lies, bring a chaos into human affairs. An individual who keeps a company of twelve persons waiting for him but five minutes, wastes an hour. "Punctuality" says an elegant writer, "is a quality which the interest of mankind requires to be diffused through all the ranks of life, but which many seem to consider as a vulgar and ignoble virtue, below the ambition of greatness or the attention of wit; scarcely requisite among men of gayety and spirit, and sold at its highest rate when it is sacrificed to a frolic or a jest."\*

That a want of order and punctuality should be thought a mark of genius or gentility, is astonishing, and I believe is rarely thought so, except by those who have nothing of either but the affectation of them. Many, I have no doubt, have set up for great wits, and fine ladies, upon no other pretensions to either than a sturdy opposition to all order of time and place.

\* Punctuality has another reference besides our time, I mean to our *word*. To promise without intending to perform, is absolute falsehood. But we ought to be very cautious how we bind ourselves by a promise which is subject to contingencies beyond our foresight, or above our control. Many a man has subjected himself to the reproach of a liar without intending to deceive. Some people make all engagements with their eyes shut, and no sooner open them than they find it impossible to fulfil their word. We should always pause before we issue these verbal promissory notes, and calculate whether we have the means to meet them when they are presented for payment. Nothing can be more unjust or cruel, than a wilful want of punctuality in pecuniary transactions. It is unkind to keep, through our delays, a cook storming over a spoiling dinner in the kitchen, and her mistress fretting in the drawing-room; but to defeat the expectation of a tradesman, dependant, perhaps, for a settling, important to his credit, upon our punctuality, is a species of cruelty perfectly inhuman.



A good method wisely arranged and punctually observed in the distribution of our time, would materially assist us in rightly employing it. Religion, business, mental improvement, the exercises of benevolence, ought all, so far as the ever-varying circumstances of life will admit, to have their proper allotments. Each hour should know its proper employment, and receive its proper care in its season. No man should leave his days to be occupied by whatever accident or chance can seize them; for then trifles, being more common and clamorous than other things of greater importance, are likely to run off with the greatest share.

Have always some work in hand, which may be going on during the many intervals, for many there will be, both of business and recreation. *Pliny*, in one of his letters, where he gives an account of the various methods he used to fill up every vacancy of time, after several employments which he enumerates, says, "Sometimes I hunt; but then I carry with me a pocket-book, that whilst my servants are busy in disposing of the nets and other matters, I may be employed in something that may be useful to me in my studies; and that if I miss of my game, I may at the least bring home some of my own thoughts with me, and not have the mortification of having caught nothing all day." This is the way to excellence and wisdom; and it is a road open to all. Carry about with you, therefore, some book, or subject, which will gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost; for these fragments, like chips of diamond, or filings of gold, are too precious to be thrown away. It is with our property as it is with our time, when we look at it in the gross, we spend freely because it seems as if it would never be exhausted; and when we have hours, half-hours, or quarters, we squander them because they are not worth keeping. There is a proverb which our frugal ancestors have taught us, "Take care of the shillings, and the pounds will take care of themselves." So in reference to our time, I would say, "Take care of your hours, and the years will take care of themselves." A man that is thrifty in his money, will grow rich upon what another throws away as not worth saving; so a man that is thrifty of his time, will grow wise by those interstitial vacancies which intervene in the most crowded variety of employment, and which many are foolish enough to squander upon trifles, or saunter away in idleness.

*Avoid procrastination.* Do at once what at once ought to be done. Let not the season of action be spent in the hesitancy of skepticism, or the purpose of future effort. Do not let *to-morrow* be perpetually the time when every thing is to be done, unmindful that the present time alone is ours, as the past is dead, and the future yet unborn.\*

*Erasmus* furnishes one of the most striking instances on record of the fruits of a diligent improvement of time. "His life was one continual peregrination; ill supplied with the gifts of fortune, and led from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom, by the hopes of patrons and preferment, hopes which always flattered and always deceived him, he yet found means, by unshaken constancy and a vigilant employment of those hours which, in the midst of the most restless activity, will remain unengaged, to write more than another, in the same condition, would have hoped to read. Compelled by want to attendance and solicitation, and so much versed in common life, that he has transmitted to us the most perfect delineation of the manners of his age; he joined to his knowledge of the world, such application to books, that he will stand for ever in

the first rank of literary heroes. How this proficiency was obtained, he sufficiently discovers by informing us that the '*Praise of Folly*,' one of his most celebrated performances, was composed by him on the road to *Italy*, lest the hours which he spent on horseback should be tattled away without regard to literature."

A right improvement of time, then, my dear children, is the way to knowledge, which does not in every case require uninterrupted leisure; only keep the mind open to receive ideas, and diligently employ every spare moment in collecting them, and it is astonishing how rapidly the accumulation of mental treasure will go forward. But it is chiefly in reference to eternity that I exhort you to redeem the time. Too many attempt to justify their neglect of religion by pleading a want of opportunity to attend to its high concerns: but how inadmissible such a plea is, the subject of this chapter plainly proves: for, as we have formerly shown, religion is a right disposition of mind towards the great and blessed God; and we now see that such a disposition, besides the more solemn seasons of public and private prayer, will pour its influence over the whole of a man's life, and fill the interstices which are left between the most crowded occupations, with ejaculatory petitions to heaven, and the aspirations of a soul panting after God, and the anticipations of a renewed mind looking towards eternity.

Remember, then, above all things, that time was given you to repent of sin, to pray for pardon, to believe in Christ to work out your salvation, to lay up treasures in heaven, to prepare for the solemnities of judgment, and secure that happiness which is not measured by the revolution of years, but is, in the strictest sense of the word—*eternal*.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### ON THE OBLIGATION TO ENTER INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

RELIGION is a personal thing, and the gospel first addresses us in our individual and separate existence. We must each for himself repent of sin, believe in Christ, obey the law. Nothing can be a substitute for this: no line of pious ancestry, no connection with living Christians, no communion with the church of God, will be of any avail to us in the absence of faith and holiness. Still, however, religion, though personal in its nature, is social in its tendency and exercises: it is superinduced on a being formed for society, and who carries this propensity of his heart into his every situation. Hence his piety leads him to seek the companionship of men of "like precious faith." Christianity acknowledges and hallows this principle of our nature, and exhibits it in her own divine institutions. The New Testament, therefore, while it insists on the necessity of a personal religion, equally demands a social one. It knows nothing of that piety which keeps its possessor separate and apart from those who partake with him of the "common salvation." The first thing we read of, after the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, is the preaching of the gospel; the next the conversion of sinners, and then we find that "they that gladly received the word were baptised; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart, praising God, and having

\* See an admirable story in Miss Edgeworth's *Popular Tales*, entitled *To-Morrow*.

favor with the people. And the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved."

Such is the lovely picture which the inspired historian gives us of the first effect of the preaching of the gospel, in which we perceive, not only that souls were converted, but that immediately upon their conversion they were drawn to each other by the force of mutual love, and formed a voluntary and blessed fellowship. No one that believed the gospel remained separate and apart from the rest, but gave himself up to be one with the Church; and indeed, till he did this, was not acknowledged as a Christian. This was always the case in the primitive times; as soon as a man believed, that same day, without being put upon his trial for months, he united himself with believers. No such custom then existed, as persons, who were acknowledged to be Christians, remaining year after year in no visible connection with the body of Christ; this is a system of modern times.

Indulging a hope, which indeed is one of the most blissful expectations of my heart, that you, my dear children, will be partakers of the grace of God, the faith of the gospel, and the love of Christ, I shall now strongly enjoin upon you an early association with some Christian society. It is on these suppositions only that I recommend it. It is intended, not so much to make men Christians, as to maintain and improve their Christianity: not as an ordinance of conversion, as of edification, sanctification, and consolation. A Christian church is thus described in the Epistles of Paul: "To all that be in Rome beloved of God, called to be saints." "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." Unless, therefore, you really believe in Jesus Christ, and are sanctified by the spirit of God, you are not meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. If you were to join the church in an unconverted state, you would be as an enemy amongst brethren, a stranger amongst friends, an alien amongst citizens, a rebel amongst subjects. Taking it then for granted that you believe in Christ and supremely love him, I admonish you to connect yourselves in his own way, with his own people.

*It is your solemn and bounden duty.*

Mistake not by supposing that this matter is left to your choice; it is no more optional than any other part of religion. You may just as well imagine that it is optional whether you shall keep the sabbath or not.—Strange it is that this part of a Christian's duty should have been detached, by many persons, from all the rest, as an observance which had no obligation upon the conscience. Was it not an invariable practice, in the first ages of the church, for those who were converted, to enter immediately into the fellowship of the faithful? Our Lord's language in reference to the sacred supper, is a *command*, not an invitation; it is the language of *authority*, not of advice: "Do this in remembrance of me." Now as the supper is a church ordinance, this injunction makes it absolutely imperative on all his disciples to unite themselves to the "household of faith."

Far be it from me to say that a person cannot be a Christian unless he be a church member, for I have already observed that he ought to be a believer *before* he enters into fellowship: but I will say, that he who loves Christ, and yet continues unconnected with the church, is living in that instance in direct disobedience to his Lord's commands. And if one of the primitive Christians were permitted to come from his celestial seat into our assembly at the time we were preparing to celebrate the supper, he would very certainly and naturally conclude, that all those persons who rose and retired from the emblems of the Saviour's body and blood, neither believed in him, loved him, nor obeyed him. And when informed, that amongst that crowd there were still some of whom we entertained hope that

they did in reality love Jesus Christ, with what surprise and emphasis would he exclaim, "Love Christ! what and live in habitual disobedience to his commands? We have no such love as that in heaven, nor had we when I lived on earth."

*It is your unspeakable honor to be early in the church.*

It has been the dishonor, and is still the reproach, of multitudes, that they neglect this divine ordinance. Admitting that upon the whole the man is a Christian, and yet through some mistaken notion is unconnected with a company of believers, what a spot is it upon his character, what a stain upon his garments, to see, him, when the company of Christ's disciples are collecting round the table, hurrying away with the multitude of carnal, worldly, sensual persons; thus associating in this act of disregard to Christ's authority, with some that are profane, others that are skeptical, others that are immoral. What a disgrace is it to any one who pretends to bear the name of Christ, to be seen thus turning his back on the friends of the Redeemer, and walking away from the Christian Institute with the enemies of the cross. But alas! this reproach is too common to be felt as it ought.

But it is so much the greater honor to observe this duty, by so much the more it is neglected. It is considered delightful to see the head of the youthful senator, whose breast is full of patriotic ardor, lifted amidst the venerable forms of aged statesmen; and the juvenile warrior fighting by the side of veteran heroes in his country's cause; and how much more delightful to see the young Christian, undeterred by a false and sinful shame, unrestrained by the examples of many of his seniors, entering the fellowship of the faithful, and, in the presence of the world, exclaiming, "I am not ashamed of Christ, or his words, before this adulterous and sinful generation. Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee: but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God; their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. O Lord, truly I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people: in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord."

Oh my children, may I see this honor lighting on you; may it be granted me to see you sitting amongst the followers of the Lamb, associated with the church of the living God; and I am not very solicitous for you to obtain the wreath of fame, or any of the distinctions which men can confer upon each other; the honor of being an early and consistent member of that fellowship, of which God in Christ is the head, is, in my eyes, a crown of glory, compared with which the diamonds of monarchs are gilded toys.

*Church fellowship is an inestimable privilege.*

It is connected with, and leads to many solemn, delightful, and beneficial observances. It is by joining ourselves to the church, that we have a *right to the Lord's Supper*. This sacred feast is to be observed by the church; not by individuals in their separate condition. In approaching the table of the Lord, we are to go as one of a company. It is intended at once to exhibit our unity, and to preserve it. That bread which is the emblem of the *natural* body of Christ broken for sinners, is at the same time, by its many parts in union with each other, the emblem of his *mystical* body. It is an ordinance which at the same time sets forth both our union to Christ by faith, and to each other by love. It shows one church deriving salvation from the death of one Redeemer. Hence the object of our partaking



of the sacred Supper is, to keep up right affections to Christ, and to each other for Christ's sake. Precious, my children, are those hallowed seasons of communion which are spent by the disciples at the table of the Lord. No sensual gratifications will bear any comparison with the sublime delight of those sacred entertainments. What scenes of past wonder and sorrow, and triumph are brought to recollection, even the incarnation, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ; yes, those apparently insignificant emblems, bring before the mind, so far as the mind can comprehend it, the whole of the vast scheme, devised from eternity in the counsels of Omniscience, for the salvation of a ruined world, and executed by the Son of God upon the cross. What present emotions of wonder, joy, love, gratitude, to him, "who loved us and washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests to God and the Lamb," does the Supper produce and cherish. What visions of future glory, connected with the second coming of our Lord, does the institution call up before the eye of hope. How forcibly are the rich blessings of grace, and the eternal blessings of glory, brought home upon the heart. All the virtues of Christianity are strengthened, all its privileges are enjoyed. The soul, by being brought nearer to Christ, is brought nearer to his disciples. The joys of salvation are more rich and full, by being experienced in the company of those who are heirs of the same bliss.

Union with the church gives a right to attend all the more private meetings of the brethren, where pastoral exhortation is delivered, brotherly love is cherished, members are admitted, and all the transactions of the household of God are managed.

Church membership is connected with many pleasant reflections. In such a situation we have the consciousness of our being where we ought to be; of our obeying the will of Christ; of our being in the midst of the righteous, as one of their number, and an object of their interest.

It is no inconsiderable means of spiritual safety. In general it may be urged that the path of duty is the path of safety. Where are we so likely to enjoy the showers of divine grace, as in those gardens of the Lord on which they more usually fall? "God meeteth him that worketh righteousness." It is connected with pastoral oversight and watchfulness, with brotherly inspection, exhortation and reproof; it secures an interest in the prayers and sympathy of the disciples; and then it leads us to consider the additional obligations which lie upon us in consequence of our profession, and the more painful effects which would thus follow an act of inconsistency: in short, it seems to be an additional defence for us against the dangers to which we are exposed in our spiritual warfare. In looking forward to our approach to the table of the Lord, we shall be led to more frequent and serious examination; in looking back to the vows which we there brought ourselves under, we shall be stirred up to more caution; considering through the month previous, that we are soon to appear amongst the saints at the sacramental board, we shall find this a check to temptation, a stimulus to duty, a motive to consistency; and looking back during the month that follows, upon what then took place, we shall find the retrospect no less salutary than was the prospect. A regard to our own reputation and comfort will join itself with a concern for the honor of Christ, and the prosperity of the Church, to operate as a preservative against unholiness or sinful indulgence. We are poor frail creatures, and our spiritual strength is so feeble as to stand in need of every additional help; and it is no inconsiderable assistance that is furnished by Christian fellowship. Companionship is one of the hot-beds both of sin and holiness. Trees grow better, as I have already remarked, in plantations; they shelter each other from the vio-

lence of the wind, and the severity of the cold, and draw each other into a taller and a straighter growth; so it is with the trees of righteousness of God's own right hand planting, and it is by being thus planted in the house of the Lord, that they shall flourish as the palm tree, and grow as the cedar in Lebanon.

You may thus be useful to others. Your parents will rejoice over you with unutterable joy; your ministers will be encouraged in the work of the Lord; other young persons, if serious, may be drawn by you into the church, or, if unconverted, may have their attention roused, and their conscience awakened; the more aged who have neglected this duty will be stirred up to shame and repentance: thus what is so beneficial to you, will extend its advantages to others; and the King of Zion will look upon you with peculiar and ineffable delight.

Before this chapter closes, however, I must answer the objections which are but too commonly brought by young persons, even by those whose hearts are right with God, against this act of obedience to Christ.

*Some are in doubt about their personal religion.* Where this is the case, let them not remain in doubt any longer, but examine themselves, and bring the matter to an issue. "Examine yourselves," saith the apostle, "whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." This is too important an affair to remain undecided and in suspense. Nor need you be kept in the dark about it. If you really reflect, you must know whether you believe the gospel or not; whether you love the Lord Jesus or not; whether you are obeying God or not. Do not doubt your religion under the mistaken apprehension that doubts are proofs of piety, and evidences of humility. Your inquiry is not to be, "Am I a perfect Christian?" but, "Am I a real one?" If you can answer the latter question in the affirmative you ought not to remain out of the communion of the church.

Others are saying, *I am not fit to join the church yet.* Then you are not fit to die. God requires no other prerequisite to the Lord's table, than what he does to heaven; and all the fitness he requireth for either, is to be convinced of sin, to believe the gospel, and to forsake unrighteousness.

*I am afraid, say some, of making a public profession, lest I should dishonor Christ by sinning after it.* In some cases this is nothing more than an excuse for not making a profession at all, as if it were no sin to offend God before a profession is made. Many dread the idea of binding themselves by the acknowledgment that they are Christians; forgetting that it is their sin not to make a profession, and that they will be condemned for neglecting it, as some others will be for disgracing it. If, however, it be really the mistaken scruple of a timid mind, I would say again, the way of duty is the way of safety; do your duty, and trust God for preserving grace. For a man to be afraid of doing what is right, lest he should afterwards do wrong, is singular caution: he forgets that by his neglect he is already sinning. What reason is there in saying, "I am very weak, and therefore will neglect this proposal, I am liable to start aside; and therefore will not avail myself of this Scriptural restraint."

*I am too young in years,* is the frequent thought of young people. Certainly not, if you are not too young to believe the gospel, to love Christ, and to discern the Lord's body. Is there any age specified in the New Testament, below which no one is to join the church. If so, were is it? There is none. Faith working by love is the qualification for membership, not years. Children of ten years of age, or even younger, if they are believers, ought to be admitted as members. Age has nothing to do with it. If we might make any difference, I was going to say, the younger the more welcome. Jesus showed his favor to the young when he

said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

*I am too young in the faith*, say others. Not if you are sincere. If we make the word of God our guide in this matter, (and what else ought to guide us?) then we must infer that a sincere belief of the gospel, with a competent knowledge of the ends of church fellowship, is all that ought to be required of a candidate for membership. You may have been converted only a month, but if truly converted that is no objection. The same day that they believed, the three thousand persons converted under the sermon of Peter, were added to the Church. The privileges of fellowship are needed, if possible, more by the young than by the aged Christian: they are milk for babes, as well as strong meat for them who have attained to riper years.

*I see it neglected by others older than myself, even by my own brothers and sisters.* Would it be any excuse for your neglecting salvation altogether, if they were to do so? Certainly not; for religion is a personal concern the obligations of which are in our case, in no degree dependant on the manner in which they are acknowledged by others. The more it is forgotten by others, the more we should feel excited to practise its duties ourselves. Your obedience is not to be withheld because your friends or relatives neglect theirs. It may be, that your decision will have a favorable influence on their minds: if not, and even on the contrary, you should by such an act incur their displeasure, you are not to let this operate on your heart. Your duty to Christ is paramount to all other considerations, and you must obey him though it be by taking up your cross.

*I do not like the mode of admission to our churches.* "I do not like to be examined as to my religious views or experience, nor to submit the state of my mind, to the consideration of the church." If you mean to say you refuse *all examination*, this savors of pride or ignorance, and plainly manifests either that you do not understand the nature of a Christian church, or understanding it, refuse to submit to its discipline; in the latter case, I do not see how you can be a Christian; in the former, you must be better instructed before you associate yourself with the faithful. If you mean only, that you would rather not either *write*, or deliver *verbally before the church*, your views and feelings on religion, I reply, that no church ought to insist upon it; all they ought to do, is to state what is their usual custom: but if you have scruples of a tender conscience, they ought to be satisfied with the report of the pastor and brethren who have conversed with you.

*I tremble at the denunciation, where it is declared by the apostle, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."* This word had better have been rendered "*judgment*," as it refers to those visitations of temporal punishments, with which the members of the Corinthian Church were punished for their profanation of the Lord's Supper. It certainly was not the apostle's intention, as some weak and timid minds seem to think that sins committed after this act of Christian communion, are unpardonable. Transgressions committed after a participation of the eucharist, are, it is confessed, additionally heinous, because committed against increased privileges and obligations, but they are still pardonable through "the blood of Christ which cleanseeth from all sin."

*I may be a Christian, and get to heaven without being united with the Church.* That there are some in this case, I have no doubt; but it becomes a question whether any one can really be a Christian, who knows it to be a duty, and yet wilfully neglects it under the pretext just stated.

*I do not like the Church which is formed in the place where I live. I am neither pleased with the pastor nor the people.* If the minister is unholly and erroneous, or

the people divided into parties, and destitute of both peace and purity, this excuse may be admitted; but if the objection apply to the talents of the minister, or the worldly circumstances of the Church, we are discovering a spirit of pride and worldly-mindedness, in thus refusing to obey the command of Christ, which renders our faith very questionable, or proves it to be very weak.

Having thus explained the nature, and stated the advantages of church fellowship, and replied to some of the excuses by which a neglect of it is attempted to be justified, I must leave the subject to your serious consideration. It is perfectly obvious to every thinking and observant mind, that the obligations to this act of duty, are not felt, at least as they ought to be, by many who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious." To such persons I recommend the consideration of those passages in which a profession of our faith *before men*, is most awfully demanded. "Whosoever," saith our Lord, "shall confess my name before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven: and whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." These words occur also, with little variation, in the Gospel of Luke. The same sentiment is conveyed by the apostle Paul: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*." In these passages, and others of a similar meaning, a confession, or profession, for the words are nearly the same in signification,\* bears a very close connection with the hope of salvation: and how any one can be said to make a confession of Christ, who does not connect himself with a Christian church, I am certainly at a loss to understand.

On this subject I refer for a more enlarged view, to my treatise on "Christian Fellowship, or the Church Member's Guide."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### ON THE CHOICE OF A COMPANION FOR LIFE.

"THE first blessing," says Bishop Taylor, "God gave to man, was society; and that society was a marriage; and that marriage was confederate by God himself, and hallowed by a blessing. The first miracle that Jesus Christ ever performed, was to do honor to a wedding, which he graced with his presence, and supplied with a part of its provision. Celibacy, like the fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined, and dies in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house, and gathers sweetness from every flower and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world with delicacies, and keeps order and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God hath designed the present constitution of the world."

"But then with how much caution, and extreme care, and sound discretion, and fervent prayer, ought this union to be formed; for they who enter into the

\* Perhaps the English words *profession* and *confession* have this difference of signification,—the former means the *unasked* avowal of our faith: the latter, the *acknowledgment* of our sentiments when *required* to declare them: answerable to which *professors* means Christians in general; *confessors*, those who in times of persecution acknowledge their sentiments at the demand of their persecutors.



state of marriage, cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband: she must dwell upon her sorrow which her own folly hath produced, and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God as subjects do of tyrant princes, but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neighbors he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply."

Who then that is wise, would not be slow to decide, where so much depends upon the decision; and grow up in a habit of putting the affections and the imagination under the control of the judgment? If it be important to exercise deliberation in reference to those connections which may be dissolved at pleasure, how much more in the case of those which nothing can terminate but the stroke of death!

The first piece of advice I offer is, *not to think of this important affair too soon, nor suppose it necessary that a young person of eighteen or nineteen should begin to pay and receive particular attentions.* Do not court the subject, nor permit your imagination to be for ever dwelling upon it. Rather put it from you than bring it near. Repress that visionary and romantic turn of mind, which considers the whole space that lies between you and the altar, as a dreary waste, all beyond it as a paradise: in innumerable instances the very reverse has been the case, and the exchange of a father's for a husband's house has been like the departure of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden to a wide uncultivated wilderness. "The stags in the Greek epigram, whose knees were clogged with frozen snow upon the mountains, came down to the brooks of the valleys, hoping to thaw their joints with the waters of the stream; but there the frost overtook them and bound them fast in ice, till the young herdsmen took them in their stranger snare. It is the unhappy chance of some persons, finding many inconveniences upon the mountains of single life, they descend into the valleys of marriage to refresh their troubles, and there they enter into fetters, and are bound to sorrow by the cords of a man's or a woman's peevishness; and the worst of the evil is, that they have to thank their own follies, for they fell into the snare by entering an improper way;" and I may be permitted to add, by entering it too early and too hastily.

It is on this ground that novels, the most pernicious mental poison the press can disseminate, are so much to be deprecated; they inflame the imagination with visionary scenes and adventurous exploits, on a subject which the heart ought never to approach but under the guidance of a sober judgment. Young people should be cautious in their social intercourse, of converting this subject into matter of merriment, much more should they beware of aiding and abetting each other in the formation of such connections. Never, be the confidant of individuals who are engaged in an affair of this kind unknown to their parents: nor be the medium of communication between them. Third persons, who have been ambitious of the honor of matchmaking, have often done mischief to others, which, however they afterwards lamented, they were never able to repair. I know some whose lives have been embittered, and ever will be, by seeing the rueful consequences of those ill-fated unions, of which they were in great measure the authors.

My next admonition is, *Take extreme care of hasty entanglements.* Neither give nor receive particular attentions, which cannot be mistaken, till the matter is well weighed. Keep your affections shut up at home

in your hearts, while your judgment, aided by prudence, prepares to make its report.

When the subject comes fairly before your attention, *make it immediately known to your parents.* Conceal nothing from them. Abhor the very idea of clandestine connections, as a violation of every duty you owe to God and man. There is nothing heroic in a secret correspondence. The silliest girls and weakest men can maintain it, and have been most frequently engaged in it. Spurn the individual who would come between you and your natural guardians. Harken to the opinions of your parents, with all that deference which is due to it. Rare are the cases in which you should act in opposition to their wishes.

*Be guided in this affair by the dictates of prudence.* Never think of forming a connection till there is a rational prospect of temporal provision. I am not quite sure that the present age is in this respect more prudent than the past. It is all very pretty and pleasing, for two young people to sing of love in a cottage, and draw picturesque views of two affectionate hearts struggling together amidst the difficulties of life: but these pictures are seldom realized. Connections that begin in imprudence, generally end in wretchedness. Young people who marry without the consent of their parents, when that consent is withheld, not from caprice but discretion, often find that they are not united like two doves, by a silken thread, but like two of Sampson's foxes, with a fire-brand between them. I call it little less than wickedness to marry without a rational prospect of temporal support.

*Right motives should ever lead to this union.* To marry for property only, is most sordid and vile. We are informed that in some parts of the East Indies, it is thought no sin for a woman to sell her virtue at the price of an elephant: and how much more virtuous in reality is she, who accepts a man for the sake of his fortune? Where there is no affection at the hymeneal altar, there must be perjury of the most awful kind; and he who returns from church with this guilt upon his conscience, has brought with him a curse to his habitation, which is likely to make his prize of little worth. When such persons have counted their money and their sorrows together, how willingly with the price of their slavery would they buy again their liberty; and so they could be released from each other, give up all claims to the golden fetter which had chained them together.

*Personal attractions alone* are not enough to form a ground of union. It is an ill band of affections to tie two hearts together by a little thread of red and white. Few things are more superficial or evanescent than beauty. The fairest flower often fades the soonest. There ought to be personal attachment I admit, but that attachment should be to the mind as well as the body. Except we discern something lovely that will remain when the color of the cheek has faded, and the fire of the eye is extinguished, and the symmetry or the form has been destroyed, we are engaging out affections to an object which we may live to witness only as a sort of ghost of that beauty which we once loved. There should be temper and qualities of mind which we think will please us, and satisfy us, when the novelties and charms of personal attractions have faded for ever.

In the case of pious young people, neither personal nor mental qualifications, nor the union of both, should be deemed a sufficient ground of union *in the absence of religion.* The directions of Scripture on this head are very explicit. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" 2 Cor. vi. 14, 16. "She is at liberty to marry whom she will, only in the Lord." 1 Cor. vii. 39. This is a declaration of the will of

**God.** It is a clear unequivocal announcement of his mind on the subject. Viewed as advice, it is wise, for it is given by one who is infallible; but it is more than advice, it is the command of one who has authority to govern, the right to judge, and the power to punish. He who instituted marriage, has thus laid down the law, as to the principles upon which it is to be conducted. Pious young persons are here commanded to unite themselves only with those who appear to be partakers of similar dispositions. An infraction of this law is followed with many evils.

*It offends others:* it discourages ministers: grieves the church, and is a stumbling-block to the weak. It is a source of inexpressible regret to parents. "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri, the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon, the Hittite, which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah;" and Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these who are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me." This is deeply affecting, and it is but the feeling of every truly Christian parent concerning his children when they act as Esau did.

But consider the influence of an unsuitable connection *on yourselves.* We all need helps, not hinderances to heaven. Our personal religion requires props to keep it up, not weights to drag it down. In this case, not to be helped is to be hindered. The constant companionship of an irreligious husband, or wife, must be most injurious. The example is always near,—it is the example of one we love, and which has, on that account the greater power over us. Affection is assimilating; it is easy to imitate, difficult to oppose those we love. Your own religion is put in awful peril daily. But if you should escape *unhurt*, still what *sorrow* will such an association produce. What a dreadful, heart-rending idea, to love and live with those from whom you fear you shall be separated for ever: to be moving hourly to a point, when you shall be torn from each other for eternity. How sweet the consciousness which lives in the bosom of a pious couple, that if separated to-morrow, they have an eternity to spend together in heaven: but the reverse of these feelings will be yours, if you marry not "in the Lord."

Besides, how many interruptions, of conjugal felicity will you experience. Dissimilarity of taste, even in lesser matters, sometimes proves a great bar to happiness. Between those who are so nearly related, and so constantly together, there should be as great a likeness of disposition as possible. But to be unlike in the most momentous of all concerns, is an affair of perpetual recurrence!! Is this the way to be happy? Will the strongest affection surmount this obstacle, or ought the experiment to be made?

And then, *think on the influence it will have on all your domestic arrangements* on your servants, and especially on *your children*, should you have any. You will be left alone, and perhaps counteracted, in the great business of family religion. Your plans may be thwarted, your instructions neglected, your influence opposed. Your off-spring, partaking of the evil nature common to their species, are much more likely to follow the worldly example than the spiritual one.

*The Scripture is replete with instances of the evil resulting from the neglect of religious marriages.* This was the sin which filled the old world with wickedness, and prepared it for the deluge. Some of Lot's daughters married in Sodom, and perished in its overthrow. Ishmael and Esau married irreligious persons and were both rejected, and turned persecutors. The first captivity of the Jews, after their settlement in the Holy land, is ascribed to this cause.\* What did David suf-

fer from this evil? The case of Solomon is a warning to all ages. This was the sin that Ezra so grievously lamented, so sharply reprov'd; and in which he was followed by Nehemiah.

But I need not go to Scripture for instances of this nature: they stand thick all around us. What misery what irregularities, what wickedness, have I seen, or known to exist in some families, where the parents were divided on the subject of religion.

Young people often attempt to persuade themselves on very insufficient grounds, that the objects of their regard are pious. They evade the law of God, by considering them as *hopeful, inquiring.* But are they decided? In some cases they wish them to enter into church fellowship, as a kind of proof that they are godly. At other times they believe, that although their friends be not quite decided in their religious character, yet, by being united with *them*, they will become so. But are we to do evil that good may come? Is marriage to be considered one of the means of grace? It is much more probable that such a connection will do injury to the pious party than good to the unconverted one. I have seen the experiment often tried, but scarcely ever succeed, of marrying an unregenerate person with the hope of converting him. Dr. Doddridge says, he never knew *one* instance in which this end was gained.

I do not mean to say, that religion, though indispensable, is the *only prerequisite* in the individual to whom you should unite yourselves. Temper, age, rank, mind, ability to preside over domestic cares, should all be taken into the account. Many, when expostulated with on their being about to form an unsuitable connection, have replied, "Oh he is a very good man, and what more would you have?" Many things: a good disposition, industrious habits, a probability of supporting a family, a suitableness of age and station, a congeniality of general taste. To marry a person *without* piety, is sinful; to marry *for* piety *alone*, is foolish.

Again I entreat you to recollect that the marriage union is for life; and if it be badly formed, is an evil from which there is no refuge but the grave, no cure but in death. An unsuitable connection, as soon as it is found to be so, throws a gloom, not merely over some particular periods of our time, and portions of our history, but over the whole: it raises a dark and wide spreading cloud, which extends over the whole horizon of a man's prospect, and behind which he sees the sun of his prosperity go down for ever, while it is yet noon. It is a subject on which the most delicate reserve, the most prudent caution, and the most fervent prayer, are indispensably necessary. It is not, as it is too frequently thought and treated, a mere sportive topic to enliven discourse with, or an enchanted ground for the imagination to rove in, or an object for a sentimental mind to court and dally with; it is a serious business, inasmuch as the happiness of many is concerned in it; their happiness not for a part of their lives, but the whole of it; not for time only, but for eternity. And, therefore, although I would not surround the altar of Hymen with scare-crows, nor invest it with shades as deep as those of the sepulchre, which men are more afraid than eager to approach; so neither would I adorn it with the garlands of folly till I have rendered it as frivolous as the ball-room, where men and women are paired for the dance, with no regard to congeniality of mind, with no reference to future happiness, and no object but amusement.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

ON KEEPING IN VIEW THE GREAT END OF LIFE.

NEVER was there a more rational or important question proposed for the consideration of the human un-

\* Judges iii.



derstanding, than that which stands first in the Catholicism, and you, my children, have been taught from your youth up, "What is man's chief end?" This, I say, is most rational and most important, for every thinking being should certainly ask himself, "What is the great end of my existence? I find myself in a world where innumerable objects present themselves to my notice, each soliciting my heart, and each claiming to be most worthy of its supreme regards. I have faculties of mind capable of high pursuits. I perceive, by universal experience, that my stay in this world will be very short, for I am only a stranger and sojourner here upon earth, as all my fathers were; and as I am anxious not to go out of the world without answering the end for which I came into it, I would wish to know the chief purpose for which I exist." Such a reflection is what every one *should* make, but which very few *do* make. Would they fritter away their lives, as they do on the most contemptible trifles, if they seriously inquired for what purpose their lives were given?

What, then, is the *chief* end of man? You will perceive, I lay all the stress of the inquiry on the adjective; for there are many ends to be kept in view, many purposes to be accomplished, many objects to be sought. We must provide for our own sustenance and the comfort of our family: we should store our mind with useful knowledge: endeavor to be useful, ornamental, and respectable members of society: and there are many other things which may be lawfully pursued; but we are now considering that *one great object, which is paramount to all others, to which all others must be subservient, and the loss of which will constitute life, whatever else we might have gained, a lost adventure.*

There are five claimants for this high distinction, this supreme rank, in the objects of human pursuit, the pretensions of which shall be separately examined.

*Riches*, with peculiar boldness, assert their claims to be "*the one thing needful*," and multitudes practically confess the justice of the demand. Hence, there is no deity whose worshippers are more numerous than Mammon. We see many all around us who are obviously making this world the exclusive object of their solicitude. Wealth is with them the main chance. For this they rise early and sit up late, eat the bread of carefulness and drink the water of affliction. This is their language, "I care for nothing if I may but succeed in business, and acquire property. I will endure any fatigue, make any sacrifice, suffer any privation, so that I at last may realise a fortune." It is perfectly evident that beyond this they have neither a wish nor an object. Money, money, money, is their chief good, and the highest end of their existence. God, religion, the soul, salvation, heaven, hell, are as much forgotten as if they were mere fables, and all the energies and anxieties of their soul are concentrated in wealth.

Is this *rational*—to say nothing of religion?

Consider the *uncertainty which attends the pursuit of this object*. Fortune has been often described as a capricious goddess, not always bestowing her golden gifts on those, who by their prudence and industry seem most to deserve them. "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." The wisest and most plodding worldling sometimes ends in poverty. And shall we seek that as the end of life, which after all we may never gain? Shall we deliberately devote existence to secure that, which after all we may never secure? How many miserable creatures are going down to the grave, confessing that they have spent their lives in courting fortune, and have scarcely obtained a smile, while others who have hardly asked a favor, have been loaded with them. Poor creatures! they may say in reference to the world, what Cardinal Wolsey did in reference to his king, "Had I served God with half the zeal that I have served Mam-

mon, he would not now have forsaken me in my old age."

But even granting that the end is secured, *do riches bring all the pleasures in their train which they promise?* It is a very trite remark, that a man's happiness is not in proportion to his wealth. "A man's life," said Christ, "consisteth not in the abundance of things which he hath;" and yet many act as if they denied the truth of the sentiment. Do you think that all rich men are happy, and that all poor men are miserable? As to mere animal enjoyment, does the affluent man receive a larger share than his poorer neighbor? Whose head acheth less for the costly plume that waves on the brow? Whose body enjoys the glow of health more for the rich velvet which enwraps it, or the lace which adorns it? Whose sleep is sounder because it is enjoyed on down? Whose palate is more pleased because it is fed with many dishes instead of one, and from silver instead of delf? Whose rest is more pleasant because it is taken upon rose-wood and chintz? Whose bosom is more free from pain because of the diamond which sparkles there? Do riches multiply the number of the senses, and give other inlets of sensation to the soul, or increase the power of those we already possess? Do they add to the just and natural appetites, or afford greater gratifications to those we already feel? Do they ensure health, keep off disease? Nothing of the kind. Numerous servants, splendid equipages, rich furniture, luxurious living, are in the amount of a man's happiness, but as the small dust of the balance. We may say of these things as Pliny did of the pyramids of Egypt, "They are only proud proclamations of that wealth and abundance which their possessor knew not how to use."

Care is the shadow of possession, and the magnitude of the shadow will always be in proportion to the dimensions of the substance. Great wealth certainly makes a man many anxieties. What shall I do? is a question often asked by affluence, as well as by penury. There is nothing in earthly things *suited as a portion* to the desires of the human mind. The soul of a man needs something better for its provision than wealth. It is on this account, partly, that our Lord brands the rich man in the gospel for a fool, who, when he surveyed his treasures, he said to his soul, "Thou hast goods laid up for many years in store; eat, drink, and be merry." "A fool indeed," said Bishop Hopkins, "to reckon his soul's goods by barns full. He might as wisely have boasted that he had provided barns full of *thoughts* for his *body*, as barns full of *corn* for his *soul*."

Then *how precarious is the continuance of riches*. They appear to us as in a dream; they come and are gone; they stand by us in the form of a golden image, high in stature and deeply founded on a rock; but while we look at them they are transformed into an eagle with wings, and when we are preparing to embrace them they fly away. What changes have we witnessed even within our own circle of observation. How many do we know, now suffering want, who formerly rolled in affluence. They set out in life in the full sunshine of prosperity, but the storm overtook them, which blasted every comfort they had in the world.

And if riches continue to the end of life, *how uncertain is life itself*. How often do we see persons called away by death in the very midst of their prosperity. Just when they have most reason to desire to live, then they must die. Their industry has been successful, their desires after wealth have been gratified, they build houses, plant gardens, and when preparing for many years of ease and enjoyment, they quit all—for the SEPULCHRE; and then whose shall those things be which they have amassed? It is recorded of Saladin, the Saracen conqueror, that after he had subdued Egypt, passed the Euphrates, and conquered cities without number; after he had retaken Jerusalem, and

performed exploits almost more than human, in those wars which superstition had stirred up for the recovery of the Holy Land; he finished his life in the performance of an action that ought to be transmitted to the most distant posterity. A moment before he uttered his last sigh, he called the herald who had carried his banners before him in all his battles; he commanded him to fasten to the top of a lance the shroud in which the dying prince was soon to be buried. "Go," said he, "carry this lance, unfurl this banner, and, while you lift up this standard, proclaim, This, this is all that remains to Saladin the Great, the Conqueror, and the King of the Empire, of all his glory." Yes, and that piece of crape in which his perishing remains shall be onwrapped, is all that will be left of his wealth to the rich man when he quits the present world. Not one step will his riches go with him beyond the grave. What a sad parting will that be when the soul shall leave all its treasures behind in this world, and enter upon another state of existence, whither it cannot take a farthing, and where it would be useless if it could take it all. Then the miserable spirit like a shipwrecked merchant, thrown on some strange coast after the loss of all his property, shall be cast on the shore of eternity without one single comfort to relieve its pressing and everlasting necessities.

Can riches then substantiate their claims to be the chief end of man? What, when it is so doubtful, whether, after all our endeavors, we shall possess them; the possession of them contributes so little to our real felicity; when their continuance is so uncertain; their duration so short; their influence upon our eternal destiny worse than nothing? Will any reasonable creature have the folly to assert, that the chief end for which God sent him into this world, is to amass property, to build a splendid house, and store it with furniture equally splendid; to wear costly clothes and feed on rich viands; to live in affluence and die rich?

The next pretender to the distinction of being the supreme good, and man's chief object of pursuit, is *Pleasure*. To this many have devoted their lives: some are living for the sports of the field, others for the gratification of the appetites, others for the enjoyment of the round of fashionable amusements. Pleasure, in one form or other, is the object of pursuit with myriads. As to the gratification of our animal appetites, few will think it necessary to have much said to persuade them, that to sink to the level of the brute creation, and hold communion with swine, and goats, and cormorants, cannot be the chief end of a rational being. Who would not be ashamed to say, and even deliberately to think, they were sent into the world to consume so much property; to devour the produce of so many men's labor; to eat and drink away the little residue of wit and reason they have left; to mingle with this *high and distinguished employment*, their impure and scurrilous jests, that they may befriend one another in proving themselves to be yet of human race, by this almost only remaining demonstration of it, that they can laugh as well as eat and drink. Surely, surely, that cannot be the chief end of man, which sensualizes, brutalizes his nature, which drowns his reason, undermines his health, shortens his life, hurries him to the grave. And also, as to what are called the *pleasures of the field*, will any man say that God sent him into the world to ride after dogs, or run after birds, or torture fishes upon a hook? Are all the high faculties of the soul to be wasted, all the precious moments of life to be consumed, in trying how many foxes, hares, pheasants, and trout we can kill; and then to spend all the time we can redeem from this converse with brutes, in making ourselves such?

*Fashionable amusements* seem to be with many the end of life. Multitudes live for pleasure of this kind. Ball succeeds to concert; the private rout to the pub-

lic assembly; the card party to the dinner party; and in this busy round of fashionable follies, does the life of many pass away. Can it then be the high object of existence to sing, and play, and dress, and dance!! Do not these things, when we reflect upon them, look more like the pursuits of butterflies, and grasshoppers, and canary birds, than of rational creatures? Is it not melancholy to see beings with faculties that fit them, if rightly improved, to converse with philosophers, with angels, with God, sinking to the amusements of children; and employing time as if it were given to them for nothing but mirth; and using the world as if it were created by God only to be a sort of play ground or tennis court for its inhabitants?

*Does this kind of life satisfy those who pursue it?* Far, very far from it. Can any person, in reality, be farther from happiness, than they who live for pleasure? You shall hear the testimony of a man who will be admitted by all to be no incompetent judge; I mean Lord Chesterfield. The world was the god of his idolatry, he tendered his service to act as high-priest for this divinity, published its liturgy, and conducted its ceremonial. What happiness he found in the worship of his deity, and how far he recommends others to the shrine, you shall learn from his own pen: and by the way, this language furnishes the most powerful antidote that was ever published to the poison contained in his trumpet volumes.

"I have run," says the man of the world, "the silly rounds of business and pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I apprise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low; whereas those that have not experienced, always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with the glare. But I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes, which exhibit and move the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles, which illumine the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of an ignorant audience. When I reflect back upon what I have seen, and what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle, and pleasure of the world, had any reality; but I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions; and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose, for the sake of the fugitive dream. Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No; for I really cannot help it. I bear it—because I must bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing but of killing time the best way I can, now that he is become my enemy. It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of my journey."

Poor, wretched, forlorn Chesterfield, and was it thus thou didst close thy career! Is it thus that the worldling, in his last moments, feels and acts, looking back upon the past with disgust, and forward to the future with despair? Then, O God, in thy mercy "deliver me from the men of this world," who have their portion in this life.

"When a Christian priest," says Bishop Horne, in alluding to the case of this nobleman, "speaks slightly of the world, he is supposed to do it in the way of his profession, and to decry, through envy, the pleasures he is forbidden to taste. But here, I think, you have the testimony of a witness every way competent. No one ever knew the world better, or enjoyed more of its favors, than this nobleman. Yet you see in how poor, abject, and wretched a condition, at the time when he most wanted help and comfort, the world left him, and he left the world. The sentences above cited from him, compose, in my humble opinion, the most striking and affecting sermon on the subject ever yet



preached to mankind. My younger friends, lay them up in your minds, and write them on the tables of your hearts; take them into life with you; they will prove an excellent preservative against temptation. When you have duly considered them, and the character of him by whom they were uttered, you shall compare them, if you please, with the words of another person, who took his leave of the world in a very different manner. 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge, will give me at that day.' Say, shall your lot be with the Christian, or the man of the world; with the apostle, or the libertine? You will not hesitate a moment; but in reply to those who may attempt to seduce you into the paths of vice and error, honestly and boldly exclaim, every one of you, with Joshua, 'Choose you this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'"<sup>\*</sup>

You will also call to remembrance, my dear children, that passage in the Life of Colonel Gardiner, whose history you have read, or should read, in which he tells us, that when living in all kinds of dissipation, and when complimented for the external gaiety of his demeanor, as the "happy rake," he was in reality so perfectly wretched, and so entirely disgusted with his mode of living, that, on beholding the gambols of his dog, he wished he could change places with the unconscious animal.

Is *pleasure* then the chief end of life? Yes, in Dr. Doddridge's explanation of it, in his beautiful epigram on his own motto—"Dum vivimus, vivamus."

'Live while you live, the epicure will say,  
And take the pleasure of the present day:  
Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,  
And give to God each moment, as it flies.  
Lord in my view let both united be—  
I live in pleasure when I live to thee.'

*Fame* is with some the great end of life. This is an object which comparatively few can hope to attain, and therefore for which few contend. Still there are some; and if they were honest, they would tell you, that vanity, which is another name for the love of fame, is a passion, which, like the venom of a serpent injected into its own body, tortures itself. The pursuit of fame is attended with a state of mind, the most remote from happiness. "When it succeeds, it degenerates into arrogance; when it is disappointed, (and it is too often disappointed,) it is exasperated into malignity, and corrupted into envy. In this stage, the vain man commences a determined misanthropist. He detests that excellence which he cannot reach. He lives upon the calamities of the world; the vices and miseries of mankind are his element and his food. Virtue, talents, and genius, are his natural enemies, which he persecutes with instinctive eagerness and unremitting hostility. There are, who doubt the existence of such a disposition; but it certainly issues out of the dregs of disappointed vanity: a disease which taints and vitiates the

<sup>\*</sup> Bishop Horne's Sermons. The works of this author present a beautiful combination of piety, elegance, and pathos. The introduction to his Commentary on the Psalms is one of the most delicious morsels of composition in the English language: and if the Commentary itself be too systematically conducted, on the principles of a typical reference to Christ, which I certainly think it is, yet who is not disposed to consider as venial the sin of being too evangelical? The man who wishes to keep alive the flame of piety in his soul, will find no inconsiderable help from Horne on the Psalms, and Leighton on Peter.

whole character, wherever it prevails. It forms the heart to such a profound indifference to the welfare of others, that what ever appearance he may assume, or however wide the circle of his seeming virtues may extend, you will infallibly find the vain man in his own centre. Attentive only to himself, absorbed in the contemplation of his own perfections, instead of feeling tenderness for his fellow-creatures, as members of the same family, as beings with whom he is destined to act, to suffer, and to sympathize; he considers life as a stage on which he is acting a part, and mankind in no other light than spectators. Whether he smiles or frowns; whether his path is adorned with the rays of beneficence, or his steps are dyed in blood; an attention to self is the spring of every movement, and the motive to which every action is referred."<sup>\*</sup> When therefore we consider that perpetual restlessness of mind, that mortification, arising from disappointed hopes; that envy, which is generated by the success of competitors; that feverish excitement, which is kept up by the intense desire of victory; the love of fame will appear too torturing a state of mind to be the end of man's existence: it is plunging into a kind of purgatory for the mere chance of reaching a celestial summit.

Should the effort to gain distinction be successful, will it then reward the pains that have been expended to gain it? We have a striking illustration of the emptiness of the rewards of fame, in the Memoirs of *Henry Martyn*. He tells us, that after a severe contest with many distinguished competitors, for the prize of being Senior Wrangler, the highest mathematical honor which the University of Cambridge can bestow upon its students, the palm was awarded to him; and having received it, he exclaims, "*I was astonished to find what a shadow I had grasped.*" Perhaps there never yet was a candidate for fame, whatever was the particular object for which he contended, who did not feel the same disappointment. The reward of fame may be compared to the garlands in the Olympic games, which began to wither the moment they were grasped by the hand, or worn upon the brow of the victor.

How often do we see the aspirants to a place in the Temple of Fame cut off by death; some just when they have begun the difficult ascent, others when half way up the hill, and a few when they have gained the summit, and tread upon the threshold of the sacred fane. A traveller thinks to gain immortal renown by tracing the unknown course of a river, laying open a new continent, discovering a new island, or describing the remains of ancient states; but dies like Cook or Mungo Park, Tweddell, or Bowditch, in the very midst of his discoveries. A warrior enters upon a military or naval life, and hopes to gather his laurels on the ensanguined field of conflict; and falling, like Wolfe or Nelson, in the hour of victory, receives the crown upon his bier instead of his brow; and leaves his monument, in lieu of himself, to receive the tribute of his country's praise. The scholar and philosopher pursue some new object of science or literature, and hope, by their success, to gain a niche for their shrine in the Temple of Fame: just as they have established their theory, and are about to receive their honor, they are removed by death, to a world where the rewards of talents have no place, but virtue constitutes the sole distinction.

O that men were wise, and would consider this! Those distinctions which now excite the desires and inflame the ambition of so many ardent minds; which absorb the time, the energies, the interest, the health of their impassioned admirers and eager pursuers, are all of the earth, earthly; all terminate with the present

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Hall's Sermon on Modern Infidelity: one of the most eloquent and conclusive pieces of argumentation in the English language.

world, and in reference to the eternal destiny of their possessors, have not the place of an atom, nor the weight of a feather. In the admiration and gratitude and applause of their fellow-creatures; in the records of the journalist, the biographer, and the historian; in the acknowledgments of the present generation, and the remembrance of posterity, they have their reward; but if they possessed not true piety, in these things alone their object terminates. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, they have their reward;" but the smile of an approving God, the hope of eternal life, the possession of everlasting happiness, is no part of it. The star of their glory is amongst the number which, at the last day, shall fall from the heavens, and set in the blackness of darkness for ever. The astonishing works of Shakspeare, Bacon, Newton, Milton, Locke, which have surrounded their authors with such a radiant crown on earth, will not be mentioned in the judgment, nor procure so much consideration as a cup of cold water, that was given to a disciple of Christ, out of love to his Master.

What is earthly renown to a man that is in eternity? If he is in heaven, the praises of the whole globe cannot add one jot to his felicity; if he be in hell, they lessen not one pang of his misery: he is in either case unconscious of all—inaccessible to all. To a lost soul in prison who had sunk to perdition under a weight of earthly honors, what a dreadful sting must such a reflection as this give to all his sufferings, "Alas! alas! while my memory is almost idolized on earth, I am tormented in this flame."

*Knowledge* presents itself to some as the end of life. To store up ideas, to amass intellectual treasures, is the end and delight of their existence; they are never satisfied with what they know, and are always seeking for something which they do not know. They are literary misers. They labor in the world of mind. These, I admit, are far more rational than the others, in selecting their chief end of existence. But still they are far from wisdom. The wisest of men has told us, "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done under the sun. I communed with mine own heart; lo, I have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me at Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit: for in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Will knowledge comfort its possessors amidst the ills of life? Will it soothe them in the agonies of death? Will it avail them at the day of judgment? However it may dignify and delight them on earth, will it entitle them to heaven, or prepare them for its bliss? No, no. Knowledge alone will raise no man to the celestial city in which God dwells. It may elevate them to earth's pinnacle, but will leave them at an infinite distance from heaven's threshold. It may lift them high above the scorn and contempt of men below, but still leave them all exposed to the wrath and curse of God from above.—There is something ineffably dreadful in anticipating the loss of any human soul: but the sense of agony is increased when we think of the eternal ruin of a mind which had accumulated all the stores of the most varied knowledge: it is painful to see the least and lowest spark of intelligence fluttering to extinction over the marshes of sensuality; but it is most painful to see one of the highest order of intelligences, darting, like a falling star, into the blackness and darkness of eternal night. It is dreadful to follow such a spirit into the unseen world, and to behold, in imagination, the meaner damned, whom he spurned on earth as a vulgar herd, taking up against him the ancient taunt, "Art thou also become like unto us?" "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

*Domestic comfort* is with many the chief, the only end of life. They aspire not to riches, they pace not the giddy round of pleasure, they have no ambition for fame, they have no taste for science or learning; to marry happily and live comfortably, in moderate competency, is the limit of their prospects and pursuits. And is this all! This the chief end of life! Consider, much that has been said of riches will apply to this. Although you seek it, it is uncertain whether you will succeed. Should you gain your object, how soon may it be taken from you again. Your trade may be ruined, the partner of your joys and sorrows may be removed by death, your health may be impaired; if none of these things happen, you yourself may be removed to another world when the one you now inhabit may appear most enchanting: or if spared to old age in undiminished enjoyment, how dreadful is the thought of going from a state of such comfort to another, in which not a ray of peace will ever fall upon the spirit through everlasting ages.

None of the things which I have mentioned, therefore, are worthy to be the objects of our *supreme solicitude*, or *ultimate pursuit*. They may be all taken up as inferior and subordinate objects. We may, in moderation, and by honest industry, not only endeavor to obtain a competency, but even affluence; we are allowed to desire and seek a comfortable settlement in the world; we may enjoy, in measure, the lawful pleasures of life; we may endeavor, if our motives are right, to establish our reputation, not only for virtue, but for talents; we may, to the widest extent, pursue our researches after knowledge: all this is allowed, not only by reason, but by revelation. Religion is not the enemy of one single excellence of the human character, nor opposed to any of the lawful possessions of the present world.

But the question to be decided is, *What is the chief end of man?* Now the definition which I would give of this is as follows: "It must be an object suited to the nature of man as a rational creature; an object which, if sought in a right manner, shall with absolute certainty be obtained; which shall not interfere with any of the necessary duties of the present state; which, when obtained, shall not only please but satisfy the mind; which shall prepare us for our eternal state of existence, and accompany us to the unseen world, as our portion for ever. All these things must enter into the chief good, the great end of life, the ultimate object of pursuit. There is but one thing in the universe to which this will apply, and to that one it will in all parts of the definition most strictly apply, and that is, *the salvation of the soul.*"

You are immortal creatures, lost sinners, capable of enjoying eternal happiness, yet exposed to the sufferings of eternal death; and what can be the chief end of an immortal being short of *eternal life*. Once admit that you are going on to eternity, and it would be idiotism to deny that any thing less than eternal happiness should be your great aim. The Assembly's Catechism has defined the chief end of man to be—"To glorify God and enjoy him for ever." This is strictly true, and accords with what I have said: for, to glorify God is to believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the soul, and under the influence of this faith, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world: and thus glorifying God on earth, we shall be taken to enjoy him for ever in that state of ineffable felicity which he hath prepared for them that love him. The salvation of the soul is a good which suits our rational nature; it is absolutely certain to those who seek it in the right way: it rather ensures than interrupts all the other duties of life; it satisfies and delights the mind, giving consolation for its troubles, and contentment to its desires; it fits us for our eternal state, and goes with us to glory as our portion for ever.



But there are few who deny this in theory, although they neglect it in practice, and therefore I must now exhort you to *keep this end of life constantly in view*. Every man, when he sets out on a journey or pursuit, should have a definite object, and constantly keep it in view. My dear children, you are setting out on the journey of life, you know the chief object of that journey, and now ever keep it before your mind. Let this conviction not only be written on your understanding, like a picture delineated on ice, or an impression produced on the snow, which thaws beneath the next sun; but be engraven on your heart, like characters on a rock, which nothing can efface—that your main business on earth is to obtain the salvation of your immortal soul. Let this conviction lie at the bottom of your whole character, let it be thoroughly wrought into the texture of all your mental habits; let it be the main wheel in the whole machinery of your conduct. It is recorded of a pilgrim, on his way to Jerusalem, that in passing through Constantinople, when that city was in its glory, he met with a friend who, wishing to detain him in the eastern metropolis, took him about to see the beauties of that celebrated place. “Very splendid,” exclaimed the pilgrim, “but this is not the holy city.” So should we say to every thing which would limit and detain our hearts on earth, “Very good in its place, but it is not salvation.”

Often inquire of yourselves and examine your hearts, whether you are keeping in mind this one thing needful. At the close of every division of your time, of your years, your months, your weeks, ask yourselves the question, “Is my eye upon the supreme summit of Christian desire and expectation; or am I beginning to lower my aim and sink my pursuit?”

Regulate all your feelings of admiration and pity, in reference to the conduct and situation of others, by this object. If you see the rich man accumulating wealth, the scholar increasing the stores of learning, the philosopher adding to the discoveries of science, the man of martial or literary renown gathering laurels to decorate his brow, but at the same time neglecting the claims and despising the blessings of religion, view them rather as objects of pity than of envy; and rank them amongst the individuals who are losing sight of the great end of a rational creature's existence. On the other hand, wherever you perceive an individual, however obscure in station, limited in acquisitions, or afflicted in his circumstances, but who is yet glorifying God, and preparing to enjoy him for ever, there realize an individual who is keeping before him the great end for which God sent him into this world, and who is fairly entitled to your warmest congratulations.

Keep this in view in the selection of situations, and the forming of connections. Are you going out into life? Accept of no situation, however advantageous in a worldly point of view it might appear, where you are likely to be cut off from the means of grace, and the helps to a life of faith and holiness; bring the rule of life to it, and ask, “Will it help or hinder me in the pursuit of salvation?” Let this direct you in choosing the place of worship you attend, and the minister you hear. Inquire not where the people of fashion go, or who is the most eloquent preacher; but where the most instructive, awakening, and improving ministry of the word is to be enjoyed; and where you are likely to be kept most steadily in the pursuit of eternal life. In the profession of your religion, dwell most on the plain and obvious and important truths of the gospel, such as are most intimately connected with the life of piety in the heart; and turn not aside to novelties, speculations, and religious curiosities. In selecting your avocation in life, keep this in mind, and if there be any calling which in your judgment necessarily takes off the mind from religion, choose another in preference. In accepting or selecting a companion for life, let not this subject be put out of view, but con-

sider how much you will be assisted or opposed in seeking eternal salvation, according as your nearest earthly friend shall be one with you in Christ. In pitching your tabernacle, inquire not only what is the air, the prospect, the facilities for trade or pleasure; but what are the means of grace, the helps to religion, the ministry of the word, the company, in the neighborhood. In short, let it appear in all you do, that the *salvation of your soul is the one thing needful, the chief business of life*.

Act, in reference to eternal salvation and the affairs of this life, as a man who most tenderly loves and ardently longs for his home, does upon his journey, in reference to that home: he provides as comfortable an inn as he can honestly obtain, he enjoys the prospects which present themselves to his eye, he is pleased with the company he meets with on the road, he gains as much knowledge as he can accumulate by the way, he performs the duties of his calling as diligently and secures as much profit as he equitably can, but still his eye and his heart are at home; for his comfort there and not his pleasure abroad, he is *supremely* anxious; so far as he can promote, or not hinder his prosperity at home, he is willing to gain knowledge, take pleasure, secure respect, abroad; but *home* is his great object; to reach that, and prepare for its increasing comfort, is his aim and his hope.

So act, my children, towards the *salvation of the soul*. This, this is the end of life: keep it constantly in mind; never lose sight of it. Gain all the knowledge, all the comfort, all the fame, all the wealth you can, in subordination to this *one great business*; but remember, that whatever subordinate ends you *may* pursue, the paramount object which you *must* seek, is to **GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOR EVER**.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ON THE MEETING OF A PIOUS FAMILY IN HEAVEN.

THE strength of our social feelings, and the pleasure which we derive from the indulgence of them, has very naturally originated the question, “Will those who were known to each other on earth, renew their acquaintance in heaven?” The feelings which prompted the question have led us to answer it in the affirmative. It might, indeed, be enough to satisfy our hopes in reference to eternal happiness, to be assured that nothing should be present which could operate as an alloy—nothing be absent that shall be felt as a defect. We know that the manifold wisdom of God is employed under the impulse of infinite love, in *preparing* a place for us; and we are also assured, that God “is not ashamed to be called our God, because he hath prepared for us a city.” All that is most essential to a state of perfect and everlasting felicity, is exhibited and promised in the word of God; the beatific vision of God and the Lamb; complete resemblance in body and soul to the Lord Jesus; the light of perfect knowledge; the purity of perfect holiness; the glow of perfect love; the eternal exclusion of sin and of the sinner; the company and converse of the spirits of just men made perfect, and the myriads of holy angels; the absence of pain and sickness, care and labor, sorrow and sighing, death and the curse; all of which are explicitly assured to the believer in the gospel of Christ—form a heaven which might entirely satisfy us, as a state of felicity seemingly incapable of addition. This is glory, honor, immortality, eternal life. And yet in the view of all this, our social nature often prompts that one more question, “Shall we know each other in the celestial world?”

The Scripture, I admit, has not, in so many words, replied to the question, nor relieved the solicitude

which asks it; and in this very reserve we see a proof of the wisdom of God. Had the Scriptures been explicit and diffuse on such topics; had they said much about the social intercourse of the unseen world; had they represented its felicity as arising in a great degree from the renewal of those friendships which were formed on earth, but suspended by death, how many would have concluded, in the total absence of all religious feeling from their hearts, that *they* were meet for such an inheritance as this. Whereas the Bible, by representing no part of the happiness of heaven but that which arises from sources strictly devotional, has given no countenance to delusion, nor furnished occasion for self-deception. None of the splendid visions which lie hid behind the veil are manifested, but such as tend to impress us with the conviction, that in order to behold and enjoy them, we must be holy, even as God is holy.

These considerations, while they account for the reserve which is maintained by the Scripture on this subject, do not, by any means, disprove the sentiment. Though I would not say with *Ireneus*, one of the earliest fathers of the church, that separate souls retain the likeness and figure of their bodies, so that they may be still known thereby in the other world; though I by no means pretend even to speculate on the precise manner or means whereby glorified immortals will attain a knowledge of each other; whether by revelation or information; by any resemblance being left on the newly raised body to what they formerly were, or by that intuition which will, no doubt, be the way in which many things will be known; yet still I think that, in some way or other, this knowledge will be obtained.

1. The enjoyments and occupations of heaven are uniformly represented as social: but where is the charm of society without mutual knowledge?

2. Heaven is uniformly represented as perfecting all our faculties; is it then probable that it will diminish *memory*, one of the most important of them? And if memory be still retained in full vigor, and it be perpetually employed, as it inevitably must be, on the past scenes of our earthly existence, is it likely that the friends and companions of that existence, inhabiting then the same celestial world with us, will be unknown to us?

3. The chief grace that will be increased in the regions of the blest, next to love to God, will be love to our companions in glory. But will not one of the most pure, elevated, and delightful exercises of this holy passion be wanting, if we are ignorant of our glorified relatives?

4. In the general judgment, which is appointed to vindicate the ways of God to man, it is nearly certain that individuals will be known to each other; and if this be the case, is it likely that their mutual knowledge will be immediately obliterated?

5. Is it likely that individuals whose names and labors bear such a close and extensive connection with the redemption and history of the church, as those of the prophets and apostles, will be unknown? And if they are known, may it not be inferred that others will be?

6. During our Saviour's abode upon earth, he afforded to the three favored disciples a glimpse of the heavenly glory: he himself was transfigured, and *Moses* and *Elias* descended in celestial brilliancy. These two eminent servants of God were known by the astonished apostles; and if known on Mount Tabor, is it not likely they will be known in the New Jerusalem?

7. Our Saviour, in one of the most impressive of his parables, represents the rich man in torments, as knowing *Lazarus* and *Abraham* in glory: now, though it be a parable, and though the whole scenery of a parable is not to be considered as conveying some moral sentiment, yet certainly nothing materially and ob-

viously at variance with the truth is ever taught by even the appendages of the chief parabolic idea.

8. We find the apostle Paul very frequently consoling himself under the sufferings and persecutions which he had to endure, by the prospect of meeting in heaven those who had been converted by his ministry on earth. His address to the believing Thessalonians is especially in point. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?" I do not see how these Christians could be Paul's crown of rejoicing in that day, if they were not known to him.

These are some of the reasons which lead me to suppose that in heaven the saints will know each other.

I am aware that it is felt by some as an objection to this sentiment, that if we shall know those of our friends who are present in glory, we shall, of course, know if any of our relatives are absent: and that if we derive pleasure from the former consideration, we shall experience as much distress from the latter. The only way of solving this difficulty is, to suppose that as a perfect knowledge of the Divine Being, and of the wisdom of all his schemes and operations, will constitute a chief part of the happiness of heaven, we shall be so convinced of the equity of his dealings towards the wicked, so divested of all the weakness of the passions, so absorbed in the love of what is right to be done, that our bliss will experience no interruption in the absence of our relatives from the world of glory. This, I acknowledge, is now hard to conceive. The day shall declare it.

Assuming then the fact, that saints will know each other in the celestial state, let us imagine, my dear children, if indeed the imagination is equal to the effort, what must be the joy attendant on the final meeting of a pious family in heaven. One of the most exquisite delights which we ever experience on earth, is the enjoyment which springs from the first interview with a friend from whom we have been separated; and this delight is in proportion to the length of time, and greatness of distance, and magnitude of danger, which have intervened between the separation and the meeting. What language can describe the thrill of transport, the almost agony of rapture, which the wife experiences in that moment when she receives a husband back again to her arms, who has been away from home for months, who has been separated from her by half the circumference of the globe, and threatened to be torn from her for ever, by the dangers of shipwreck or of battle? Or who shall set forth that scene of domestic bliss which is exhibited when the sailor-boy, after having been absent for years, returns from the dangers of the sea, and the horrors of captivity, to the bosom of his family, and exchanges extatic greetings with his parents, and his sisters, and his brothers, till all seem ready to dissolve with excess of joy? What then must be the meeting of these same relatives in heaven, after having been separated by worlds and ages: that meeting when a mother receives her children to the skies from this degenerate earth, and the father hails his offspring from the world of death to the region of life and immortality! Here imagination confesses its weakness. It is a scene we have never witnessed ourselves; nor have we ever conversed with one who has. My heart, while I write, seems to beat quicker at the thought; and the very anticipation, my dear children, raises a commotion of pleasurable feelings in my bosom, which no words could enable me to express.

Then remember this meeting is not for a mere transient interview, but for an eternal association. It is to take place in a world where adieus and farewells are a sound unknown. What an interruption does it now form to the enjoyment of domestic intercourse, that the different branches of the family cannot always live



beneath the same roof, or in the vicinity of their parents. One member after another goes from the paternal abode, and settles at a distance, till counties and perhaps kingdoms separate them from each other.—Rarely does it happen, where the children are numerous and grown to maturity, that they can all meet together. Occasionally this does happen, perhaps on a parent's birth-day, or at the festive season of the year, and then home puts forth all its charms, and pours out in copious streams its pure and precious joys: such a circle is the resort of peace and love, where friends and dear relations mingle into bliss. The parents look with ineffable delight upon their children, and their children's children, and see their smiles of love reflected from the faces of the happy group. Piety gives the finishing touch to the picture, when, ere they part, they assemble round the domestic altar, and after reading in that Book which speaks of the many mansions in our Father's house above, where the families of the righteous meet to part no more; and after blending their voices in a sacred song of praise to Him who hath united them, both by ties of nature and of grace; they receive the benedictions, and join in the prayers of their saintly and patriarchal father, who over the scene that surrounds him feels a divided heart, one moment thinking he has lived long enough in that he has been permitted to witness it, but the next breathing an aspiration to heaven for permission to witness it a few years longer.

This scene, and it is not an uncommon one, is one of the purest to be found on earth. It is, as nearly as it can be, paradise restored; or if it be, as it certainly is, still without the gates of Eden, it is near enough to the sacred enclosure to receive some of the fruits which drop over the wall. What is wanting here? I answer, Continence. It is bliss only for a season. It is a day that will be followed with a night. And the heart was often checked in the full tide of enjoyment, in the very meridian of its delights, by looking at the clock, and counting how rapidly the hours of felicity were rolling away, and how soon the signal of parting would be struck. But the meeting in heaven shall be eternal. The family shall go no more out for ever from the mansion of their Father above. Their interview shall not be measured nor limited by time. They shall meet for one day, but then that day will be everlasting, for "there is no night there." They shall spend eternal ages together. Neither the fear nor the thought of parting shall ever pass like a cloud over the orb of their felicity, nor let fall a passing shadow to disturb the sunshine of their breast. "We are met," shall they say one to another, "and we shall part no more. Around us is glory, within us is rapture, before us is eternity."

Then add to this, *the happy circumstances under which they meet*, and in which they will dwell together for ever.

They will meet as *spirits of just men made perfect*. The best regulated families on earth will sometimes experience little interruptions of their domestic enjoyment. We all have some imperfection or other, some infirmity of temper, or some inpropriety of manner, from which, through want of caution on one part, or want of forbearance on the other, occasional discords will be heard to disturb the harmony of the whole. We see that others are not altogether perfect, and we feel that we are not so. We lament the failings of the rest, and still more lament our own. This prevents perfect domestic bliss; but in heaven we shall all be perfect. We shall see nothing in others to censure; feel nothing in ourselves to lament. We shall have all that veneration and love for each other which shall arise from the mutual perception of unsinning holiness. We shall mutually see reflected the image of God from our character. There will be every thing lovely to attract esteem, and the most perfect love to show it. Every one

will possess the virtue which is loved, and the complacency by which it is beloved. Every one, conscious of unmingled purity within, approves and loves himself for that divine image, which, in complete perfection, and with untarnished resemblance, is stamped upon his character. Each, in every view which he casts around him, beholds the same glory shining and brightening in the circle of his parents, his brothers, and his sisters. Out of this character grows a series ever varying, ever improving, of all the possible communications of beneficence, fitted in every instance only to interchange and increase the happiness of all. In the sunshine of infinite complacency, the light of the New Jerusalem, the original source of all their own beauty, life, and joy, this happy family will walk for ever.\*

The joy of that meeting will arise from seeing each other in the possession of all that happiness which God hath prepared for them that love him. In a family where genuine affection prevails, the happiness of one branch is the happiness of the rest; and each has his felicity multiplied by as many times as there are happy members in the circle. In heaven, where love is perfect, how exquisite will be the bliss of each, arising from being the constant witness to the bliss of all: where the parents will see the children basking in the sunshine of divine love; receiving the warmest expressions of the favor of Christ; shining in the beauties of unsullied holiness; and bounding in the fields of uncreated light; and where the children shall see the parents, and each other, in the same happy circumstances; where each shall see all the rest in the full possession of the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

How amidst all this unrevealed and inconceivable splendor will the joy be increased by a *recollection and enumeration of the benefits conferred by one party, and the obligations incurred by the other*. What must be the delight of parents in thus seeing the fruit of their prayers, instructions, and anxieties constantly before their eyes, in the honor and felicity of their glorified children. How happy and grateful will they feel that their solicitude on earth was chiefly exercised in reference to the spiritual and eternal welfare of their offspring, and not wasted upon trifles which had no connection with piety or immortality.

With what thrilling emotions of delight will they hear these children ascribing all their salvation, so far as instruments are concerned, to them; and giving a high place in their anthems of praise to the names of their father and mother. While on the other hand, it will raise the felicity of the children to the highest pitch, to see those parents near them, to whom they owe, under God, their possession of heaven. With what mutual interest will both parties retrace the winding ways of Providence which led to such a termination of the journey of life. How will they pause and wonder at those mysterious links, now invisible, but then plainly seen, which connected the events of their history, and united them into one perfect whole. Especially, with what intense excitement will they mark each effort of parental anxiety for the salvation of the children, and see the individual and collective results of all. The revolutions of empires, the fate of armies, will then have less to engage and charm the attention, than the influence of any one piece of advice which was delivered on earth, and which had the smallest influence in impressing the heart, awakening the conscience, converting the soul, or forming the character.

What felicity will arise from the *sublime converse and employment of such a state*. Conceive of a family even on earth, whereof all the numerous branches

\* See Dwight's Sermon on Brotherly Love.

of which it is composed, each one for dignity was a prince, for science a philosopher, for affection a brother, for purity a saint, for meekness a child, all meeting in sublime and affectionate discourse; all employed in exploring together the secrets of nature, and tracing the streams of knowledge; blending, as they proceeded, the ardor of love with the light of truth. But this, what is it, to the heavenly state, where, with minds inconceivably more capacious than that of Newton's, when he weighed the gravity and measured the distance of the stars; with hearts perfect in holiness, and ages endless as eternity, we shall converse on all the highest themes which the universe can supply. Think of studying together the laws of creation, the history of all God's providential dealings with mankind, the wonderful scheme of human redemption, the character of the great Jehovah, the person of Jesus Christ, with all that stands connected with the whole range of universal being, and the manifestation of the First Cause. What a view does it give us of the felicity of heaven, to think of parents and children engaged with millions all around them, in sounding the depth of that ocean of eternal truth, which is as clear as it is deep; and eternally employed in acts of worship, exercises of benevolence, and other pleasurable pursuits, now unknown, because unrevealed; and perhaps unrevealed, because not comprehensible by our present limited faculties.

But, after all, my dear children, I seem as if I were guilty of presumption, in thus attempting to describe that which is quite inconceivable. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. We now see through a glass darkly. The Scriptures tell us much of the heavenly state; but they leave much untold. They give us enough to employ our faith, raise our most lively hopes, and produce a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; but they offer nothing to satisfy our curiosity. They bring before us a dim transparency, on the other side of which the images of an obscure magnificence dazzle indistinctly upon the eye; and tell us, that in the economy of redemption, and the provisions of immortality, there is a grandeur commensurate to all that is known of the other works and purposes of the Eternal. They offer us no details; and man, who ought not to attempt a wisdom above that which is written, should be cautious how he puts forth his hand to the drapery of the impenetrable curtain, which God, in his mysterious wisdom, has spread over that region, of which it is but a very small portion that can be known to us.

In this state, amidst all this glory, honor, and felicity, it is my sincere desire, my ardent prayer, my constant endeavor, my supreme pursuit, that your journey, my dear children, and my own, should terminate. Every thing else appears, in comparison of this, as nothing. In the view of this, thrones lose their elevation, crowns their splendor, riches their value, and fame its glory; before the effulgence and magnitude of celestial objects, *their grandeur dwindles to an invisible point, and their brightness is but as the shadow of death.* Did we not know the depravity of our nature, and that the natural man knoweth not these things, because they are spiritually discerned, we must indeed wonder, and inquire what bewildering influence it is, that is exerted upon the human mind, by which its attention is so fatally diverted from things unseen and eternal, to the shadowy and evanescent form of things seen and

temporal. It is only on this ground that we can account for the folly, the madness, of neglecting the great salvation, and seeking any thing in preference to eternal glory. Dreadful madness! which, though it indulges in the miscalculations of insanity, has none of its excuses. What but this moral insanity could lead men for any object upon earth, to neglect the pursuit, and resign the hope of eternal life?

My children! my children! whom I love with an affection which can be equalled only by that solitude for your welfare to which it has given rise, and which never sleeps nor rests, receive my admonition, and make eternal happiness the end of your existence. Look at that heaven, which, though but partially revealed, is revealed with such pure brightness on the page of eternal truth, "on the description of which, so to speak, the Holy Ghost employs and exhausts the whole force and splendor of inspiration;" look at it, that state of inconceivable, infinite eternal honor and bliss, and is there aught on earth, aught of pleasure or of gain, for which you will deliberately resign that crown of unfading glory?

I am anxious, as I have already informed you, that you may live in comfort and respectability on earth. I would have your mind cultivated by learning and science; your manners polished by complaisance; your industry crowned with success: in short, I should be thankful to see you living in comfort, respected and respectable: but above every thing else, I pray, I desire, I long that you may partake of that "faith, without which it is impossible to please God;" and that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." I have fixed my aim for you high as heaven; and covet for you everlasting life. I love your society on earth, and wish to enjoy it through eternity in the presence of God. I hope I am travelling to that goodly land, of which God hath said, he will give it to us for an inheritance, and I want you to accompany me thither. Reduce me not to the mere consolation of David, who said, *Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure.* Rather let me have to say with Joshua, "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

May it be granted me to see you choosing the way of wisdom and piety, and remembering your Creator in the days of your youth: giving to all your virtues that stability and beauty which can be derived only from religion; first receiving by faith, and then adorning by holiness, the doctrine of God your Saviour.—Then will my highest ambition, as a parent, be gratified, my most painful solicitude relieved. I shall watch your progress amidst the vicissitudes of life, with a calm and tranquil mind, assured that your piety will be your protector amidst the dangers of prosperity; or your comforter amidst the ills of adversity. If called to follow your bier, and weep upon your sepulchre, I shall only consider you as sent forward on the road to await my arrival at your Father's house; or if called, according to the order of nature, to go down first into the dark valley of the shadow of death, I shall find the agonies of separation assuaged, and the gloom of the dying chamber irradiated by those bright visions of glory, which connect themselves with the prospect of the *meeting of a pious family in the heavenly world.*



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THE  
  
COMPLETE DUTY OF MAN:

OR, A

SYSTEM OF DOCTRINAL

AND

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

BY

REV. HENRY VENN, A. M





## PREFACE

*Coming to Christ as unto a living stone, disallowed  
revel of men, but chosen of God, and precious ;  
Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual  
house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacri-  
fices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—1 Pet.  
ii. 4, 5.*

WHATEVER disputes may have been raised concern-  
ing the nature of *saving faith*, it is allowed on all  
hands to be one of the most important Christian  
virtues, and essential to the character of a Chris-  
tian.

I am ready to profess, that in conformity with the  
great lights of the primitive church, of our own  
church, and all the protestant ones, at the reforma-  
tion, and long after,\* I understand by it "a depend-  
ence upon the righteousness and death of Christ,  
as a full satisfaction to the justice of God for the  
sin of the world, in the breach of his law; and the  
sole ground of our acceptance to the reward of  
eternal life." And if any explanation of this point,  
now so very offensive to many, should be demand-  
ed, the following is humbly submitted to considera-  
tion.

Sin is the transgression of the law of the most  
high God: which law, the moment it is broken,  
subjects us to its penalty. Of this the punishment  
of the first sin committed by the first man is a most  
memorable instance, and stands in the front of the  
Bible as a perpetual and most important lesson  
of instruction to mankind, in a point of which they  
would otherwise have been ignorant: and which,  
notwithstanding the solemn manner in which it is  
related, many are very apt to overlook. This fact  
ought to be particularly remarked, as designed to  
give us a clear insight into the nature of God, and  
the nature of sin; and as being the key to all the  
subsequent discoveries of Scripture. For if the sin  
of eating the forbidden fruit cannot be pardoned,  
though its punishment was so fatal in its conse-  
quences, and involved in them the whole race of  
Adam, it may fairly be presumed that sin must in  
all cases wear the same appearance in the eyes of  
an unchangeable God. "He is the same yesterday,  
to-day and for ever:" every sin therefore, as an act  
of disobedience and rebellion against him, must be  
the object of his displeasure at all times, and will  
for ever separate from him every soul of man, in  
whom it is found unpardoned.

If you are unwilling to admit this account of the  
nature of sin, and of the nature of God, as being con-  
trary to the idea you have framed of him, and deroga-  
tory as you suppose to his perfections, it is then in-  
cumbent on you to prove, in what age or period of  
the world, under what dispensation, or new discov-  
ery of the will of God, and in what part of Scripture  
you find it recorded, that God has revoked the de-  
cree against sin, and made a change in the law given  
to man at his creation, of life upon obedience, and  
death in case of transgression. The Scripture, on the  
contrary, in perfect harmony with itself, acquaints  
us, that at the second promulgation of the law, God  
appeared in the same majesty and holiness, and  
with the same denunciation of wrath against sin-

ners, as he did at the beginning; "Cursed is every  
one that continueth not in all things which are  
written in the book of the law, to do them." On  
which, let it be observed, that as more than *temporal*  
death was necessarily implied in the threatening  
and curse to the Jews; because that was unavoida-  
bly the doom of all mankind, whether they obeyed  
or not; so it naturally suggests to us, that the *first*  
threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou  
shalt surely die," was of the same extent with the  
second, and its meaning precisely determined by it.  
In this second sentence, then, there is no relaxation  
of the first; no contrary declaration concerning  
the case of offenders, nor the least intimation of  
any change in the will of God with respect to sin.  
Indeed it would be strange if there should be any;  
such a variation or inconsistency in the character  
of God as given by himself, would be an argument  
of much greater force against the truth of the Bible  
than any yet alleged. The fact then is certain:  
"The wages of sin is death," and always will be  
so while God continues the same. What he pub-  
lished and declared at the giving of his first uni-  
versal covenant to all mankind, in the person of  
Adam, he renewed and confirmed by the delivery  
of the law to Moses, which, as St. Paul observes,  
"was added, because of transgressions, (Gal. iii.  
19,) that the desert of them might be known, and  
"That the offence might abound" (Rom. v. 20,) in  
its penalty and curse unto death, now once more  
solemnly awarded against every offender and every  
offence.

These two grand manifestations of the nature  
and will of God, of the odiousness and great evil of  
sin, and of the manner in which it is to be treated,  
are further exemplified in the judgments upon sin-  
ners recorded in Scripture. Very striking and aw-  
ful indeed they are; and here we must rest the  
point for ever, unless we would take upon us, as too  
many with horrid presumption do, to estimate the  
guilt of sin from our own false notions of it; to  
prescribe a law to God, to divest him of his sove-  
reignty, to cavil at his wisdom, and to dethrone his  
justice.

But let the reason of man, short as it is, be judge  
in the cause. The decree is gone out from the  
Almighty, and stands unrepealed in the revelation  
he has made of himself; "Cursed is every one that  
continueth not in all things written in the book of  
the law, to do them." Suppose now for a moment  
we are at liberty to call this decree in question, or  
to tamper with the threatening, by taking allowance  
for one sin. What is that sin? And if for one,  
why not for two or more: and where will you stop?  
If once you take the right of judging out of God's  
hands, there will be no end for pleading for trans-  
gression, no dread of it, no sense of good and evil,  
no submission to God's rule and authority, no obe-  
dience upon earth. The conclusion is evident; if  
all have sinned, all stand condemned by the sen-  
tence of a just God.

The expediency of the remedial covenant of gos-  
pel grace, in which mercy and truth meet together,  
righteousness and peace kiss each other, and God  
is both just and the justifier of him that believeth  
in Jesus, is here apparent: and the necessity of de-  
pendence upon the righteousness and death of

\* See the Confessions of Faith of all the Reform-  
ed Churches.



Christ is demonstrated from the preceding account of God's unalterable justice, and of the guilt of sin being the same in all ages of the world. One thing is needful: we must be declared free from guilt, and invested with a righteousness which shall stand before the law of sinless perfection, and entitle us to the kingdom of heaven. And if we have it not in ourselves, where must we look for it, but as existing in the person of Jesus Christ. Dependence therefore upon that righteousness, as wrought out by him for believers, and appointed of God for sinners to trust in, is the precious faith of the gospel by which the soul is justified before God. As no other will reconcile the divine attributes, or answer the exigencies of mankind, concluded under sin, and always sinners; so nothing else must be the ground of our hope towards God.

*Not works.* Alas! We have none—None that will bear to be weighed in God's balance, or answer the demands of his justice. Look at what you think the best action of your life, or the most excellent grace of your soul; bring it to the touch-stone; examine it by the straight rule of the commandments, considered in their whole spiritual extent, and as reaching the heart and all its motions. In the matter or manner, principle or end, be assured you will find some grievous flaw, and condemnation instead of reward will be your desert. Let the judicious and pious Hooker be heard on this head. "If God (says he) should make us an offer thus large; search all the generations of men, since the fall of our first father Adam; find one man which hath done *one* action, which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man's only action, neither man nor angel shall feel the torments prepared for both: do you think that this ransom to deliver men and angels could be found to be among the sons of men?"\*

*Not sincerity.* This has lately been adopted into our divinity, as if it were the gracious condition of the new covenant, in opposition to the law of perfect obedience. But it is no where mentioned as such in Scripture. So remarkable a variation, in a matter of the greatest importance, from other revelations which God had made of himself, and of the terms of our acceptance with him, had need be very distinctly and expressly pointed out; and yet, when the proofs of it are called for, none are produced. It is indeed altogether a claim of human invention, and as it acknowledges defect of obedience, and therefore an absolute forfeiture, it delivers us up to justice, so long as the law of strict conformity to every command of God stands in full force against us. And let the reader determine, after what has been said, whether that law was not designed to be the perpetual standard of the only obedience God will accept from man, or if not, how, or when it was abrogated.

*Not faith and works,* considered as co-operating to our justification, and both together making a claim of acceptance; for works, which are confessed to have the nature of sin, by those who call in the aid of faith to supply their imperfection, cannot be admitted to any share in our justification, and must be excluded from the idea of it, because the matter turns entirely upon another point, and the great difficulty is still to be removed. Justice must be satisfied, the law must be fulfilled; with all our duties sin is found mixed; and unless it could be supposed that the new covenant is a relaxation of every preceding one, in respect of God's judgment of sin; and that now in this last age of the world he has exhibited himself as acting under a dispensing power, and discharging sin of its guilt, our case is left desperate.

But this is a dangerous expedient, unwarranted by reason or Scripture; and we therefore believe, that "being justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and that the whole of what will be accounted our deliverance from the curse of the law, is the righteousness of Christ satisfying the divine justice by his obedience unto death, and, to the praise of the glory of his grace, imputed to sinners for salvation. This is the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast; our full security against all fears, our first and only justification.

The notion of a *first and second justification* is the offspring of pride opposing the truth of God. They who adopt it consider not the justice of God as still existing in all its rigor, and substitute instead of perfection what falls infinitely short of it. But the nature of God and the nature of sin remain always the same; consequently we are as much undone as ever, if gospel mercy extends no farther than to the first benefit of remission of sins, when we are admitted into the Christian covenant. Faith is not to be dropped after the beginning of conversion, as a thing of no further use. "The just shall live by faith;" its utility is to be experienced not once, but always; in every step of our progress, at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment; in hope, comfort, obedience here, and in heaven for ever.

It is not meant that faith has any such effect, or justifies merely as a work or righteousness of *our own*. No, it consists in the denial of the merit of all works, qualifications or habits as inherent in man; and the essence of it is an unfeigned humble submission to the righteousness of God, as accounted or given to us, and that not of debt but of grace. This may furnish an answer to those who ask, Why may not imperfect works justify as well as imperfect faith? taking it for granted that one can be no more perfect than the other. The reason is, that the indispensable condition of justification by works, is their perfection; consequently a claim founded on them must either be made good by an obedience entirely sinless, or the hope of salvation be wholly relinquished. Whereas faith, though it may be weak and imperfect, instead of exalting itself against the justice of God, and standing before him in the confidence of a lie, puts all from itself, and ascribes to God the whole glory of our salvation.

We shall close this little argument with observing, that faith is not understood, much less possessed, if it is not productive of more holiness, and more gracious affections, than could possibly be attained in any other way. The charge of vacating the law as a rule of life followed close upon the first preaching of salvation by faith, and a base suspicion of its being prejudicial to the interests of virtue, is hardly ever to be rooted out of the minds of men, till they experience the power of faith themselves. But this can have no weight with those who remember the authoritative decision of Christ himself in this point upon a remarkable occasion, in opposition to the secret conceit of a proud Pharisee: "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Luke vii. 2. It is acknowledged, it is strenuously maintained, that the heart of man is exceedingly depraved, and our affections corrupted to the very root: but you charge the nature of man with greater depravity than you are aware of, when you suppose the superabundant love of God, manifested in the plan of redemption, and especially in the wonderful manner of its accomplishment, can kindle no love, and excite no gratitude. On the contrary, it is the peculiar glory of gospel grace, to humble every believer in the dust, and to fill him with the most dreadful apprehensions of sin, in order to raise him from his dead state, and to esta-

\* Discourse on justification.

lish him in obedience from love to God, from holy admiration of his perfections, and from an earnest desire to be partaker of his blessedness. And if the gospel is not effectual to this end in the Spirit's hands, therein displayed and secured to every sinner who really believes the gospel; if the love of the Holy Trinity does not touch every string of our hearts, and put all the powers of our souls in motion to make some suitable returns to the ever-blessed God, our condition is indeed hopeless. We may venture to affirm, that a zeal for works truly Christian can be built on no other foundation; and that a desire to perfect holiness will never have a place in the heart of man, but under a sense of redeeming grace, and of the complete salvation that it sets before us.

It is therefore greatly to be lamented, that neglect of this doctrine should be so much the characteristic of our age; and that the gospel-motive to obedience should not be more generally inculcated in a Christian country. In vain do we hope to revive the decayed spirit of religion, and establish a pure morality on any other than Scripture grounds. A spurious kind of it, outward, partial, founded chiefly on love of reputation, with little regard to God, nature itself can discern, and in some degree attain. Poor and low attainment! Yet this is what we are prone to substitute in the place of inward spiritual renovation, to which nature is altogether averse.—But true holiness, which consists in profound self-abasement and subjection to the God and Father of our spirits in love of nature and will, in heavenly-mindedness, in ardent longings after purity of heart, is the genuine product of a lively faith; and I say again, no where to be found, till the ever-blessed name of Jesus, his grace and truth, his compassion, dying love, and all-perfect obedience, are the meditation, delight, and confidence of the soul.

In this view, and with these sentiments strong upon his mind, the author has endeavored in the following treatise to delineate *The Complete Duty of Man*. His book bears this title not from any arrogant conceit he holds of its worth, but from its comprehending the *doctrines* as well as the *precepts* of the gospel, from its placing things in their proper order and preparing the way to Christian practice by Christian faith, and to faith by conviction of sin. The attempt may appear to some unnecessary, as *The Whole Duty of Man*, so called, has long been in possession of general esteem, and is to be found

in almost every family. But it is evident that the great thing is wanting in that celebrated treatise, towards obtaining the end for which it was written; since Christ the Lawgiver will always speak in vain unless Christ the Saviour is first known.—Christian morality is produced and maintained by this principle, "We love God, because he first loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:" all treatises therefore written to promote holiness of living must be deplorably defective, in which the cross of Christ is not laid as the foundation, and constantly kept in view, and every duty enforced as having relation to the Redeemer. This is the apostolical method of inculcating Christian obedience; and all other obedience is pharisaical, a mere refined species of self-righteousness.

It is proper to apprise the reader that he is indebted to Mr. Dickinson's Letters for several paragraphs in the chapter on the difference between *true and false repentance*; and to Mr. Maclaurin's Sermons for several fine sentiments in the chapter *On the foundation of faith*. In a few other places also in the work, where a masterly argument, or a beautiful illustration of the subject on which the author was treating, occurred, he has taken the liberty of enriching his own work with it.

Nothing further is necessary to be added, but an earnest request, in which the author begs every reader would join with him to the Fountain of all good, that it would please Him to make the following sheets instrumental in giving to those who peruse them, such a manifestation of the glory of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as shall make sin and the world, with their bewitching charms, appear vain, despicable, odious—such a conviction of human ignorance, guilt, and depravity, as may infinitely endear the name of a Redeemer and Sanctifier, and create tender compassion and humbleness of mind one towards another—such a knowledge of the pardon and peace, the strength and power, the purity and holiness which ennoble and bless those who have scriptural faith in Christ, as may manifest the emptiness of deistical and formal religion, and excite an earnest desire to behold the meridian glory of CHRISTIANITY in the eternal world: where every creature breaks forth in fervent acknowledgment of infinite obligation, saying, WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER, AND RICHES, AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND BLESSING.



# COMPLETE DUTY OF MAN

## SUNDAY I.—CHAP. I.

### ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL.

It is evident that man is endued with an active principle entirely *distinct from his body*. For whilst his body is chained down, an unconscious mass of matter, to a spot of earth, his soul can soar and expatiate in contemplation; can reflect, and with variety almost infinite, can compare the numberless objects which present themselves before it. When his body has attained maturity and perfect strength, his soul arrives to a state of perfection, but goes on increasing in wisdom and knowledge; and when the body is feeble or sinks into decay, the soul is often full of vigor; or feels grief and anguish all its own.

To demonstrate the excellency of the soul, in its properties so singular and admirable, is of great importance: because all that is comprehended under the word religion, respects the soul. And many precepts in the book of God must be resisted as unreasonable, or slighted as unnecessary, if the salvation of the soul is not considered as the greatest good man can attain; the ruin of it, the greatest evil he can suffer.

To prove the worth of the soul, I shall make my appeal to *your own observations*, and to the *evidences of holy Scripture*, entirely waiving all philosophical inquiries into its nature, and all abstract reasoning concerning it.\*

*Observation then upon what passes before your eyes* powerfully proves the worth and excellency of the soul. For what is the case of thousands around you, if it has not already been your own? Are they not mourning over some tender parent, some affectionate friend, or near relation? One week, the dear deceased how much was he valued! What a sprightly entertaining companion, in the prime of life, perhaps of personal comeliness! The next, ah! sudden, bitter, prodigious transformation! the desirable object is become a putrid mass: the desirable object is become insufferably loathsome, fit only for the grave! Do you ask, how it comes to pass, that what was lovely to admiration, only a week or a day before, should so soon be even hideous to look on? The answer loudly proclaims the dignity and excellency of the soul. For could the dead parent, friend, or relation, hold discourse with you on the subject, his answer would be to this effect: "Are you seized with afflicting surprise? Do you, with tears of tenderness, bewail the frightful change you see, in a form long so familiar and so pleasing to you? The cause is this—The immortal inhabitant, which for a few years lodged under this roof of flesh, hath

removed its abode. My soul by its presence gave to my body all its motion, life and beauty. The instant the one took its destined flight, the other began to turn into an offensive carcase, which must moulder into dust, and dust remain, till his voice, who is the **RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**, unites it for ever to its former inmate."

From this most striking difference, therefore, between a dear parent, friend, or relation, active, useful, lovely, and the cold pale piece of outcast earth, which he instantly becomes upon the departure of his soul; understand what dignity and worth must necessarily belong to the soul.

And if from this fact, daily passing before our eyes, you turn to the page written by inspiration of God, it is impossible to remain ignorant of the excellency of the soul.

What can be imagined more grand than the account of *its creation*? Look up to the heavens: immensely high, immeasurably wide as they are, God only spake, and instantly, with all their host, they had their being. The earth, the sea, the air, with all their millions of beasts, birds, and fishes, were formed instantaneously by the breath of his mouth. But, behold! before the human soul is formed, a council of the eternal Trinity is held.—God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him," Gen. i. 26, 27. He formed his soul in its moral faculties and powers, a sinless, immortal transcript of himself.

To deface this image, and ruin a creature which the love of God had so highly exalted, was an attempt equal, to the execrable malice Satan bore against God and against the favorite work of his hand. But no sooner did the devil, by his accursed subtlety, bring on the soul an injury, tending to its utter destruction, than the most high God, by the method used to recover it, declared a second time still more loudly the exceeding greatness of its worth. For take a just survey of the majesty of Him, who only, of all in heaven, was able or sufficient to restore the soul to the favor and fruition of God. Before him the depth of the unfathomable seas, the height of the loftiest mountains, the vast dimensions of the earth, and the immense circuit of the skies, are as the small dust of the balance. Before him, the vast multitudes which people the whole earth, with all their pomp, are less than nothing and vanity. This is **HE**, behold him!\* This is he who takes upon himself a work impossible for angels to effect, the redemption of the soul. He undertakes to replace it in the favor of God—not by the word of his mouth, as in the day that he made the heavens and the earth; but by a contrivance infinitely costly

\* Let not this be thought to proceed from any ignorant contempt of philosophical inquiries, when confined to their proper sphere; since this is the determination of one of the greatest philosophers in whom our nation glories

"All our inquiries about the nature of the soul (says Lord Bacon) must be bound over at last to religion, for otherwise they still lie open to many errors. For seeing the substance of the soul was not deduced from the mass of heaven and earth, but immediately from God, how can the knowledge of the reasonable soul be derived from philosophy? It must be drawn from the same inspiration from whence the substance thereof first flowed."—*Advancement of Learning*, Book iv. Chap. 3.

\* The reader is desired, as he would not wish to dishonor and injure the Redeemer by mean and unworthy thoughts of him, to meditate deeply on the grand and divine things which are written of him. In the evangelical prophet Isaiah, you will find his majesty set forth in the most lofty and affecting manner, and by a variety of such glorious images as will more exalt your apprehensions of him than any train of abstract reasoning. In the xli<sup>th</sup> chapter, from whence the above description of his grandeur is taken, there is enough declared both of his grace and divinity to make him appear altogether glorious.

and painful; by a process of many steps, each of them mysterious to angels as well as to men. To redeem the soul, he lays aside his glory. He is born poor and mean. He lives afflicted, insulted, oppressed. In his death he is made a sin-offering and a curse, presenting to the Father a divine obedience, and a death fully satisfactory to his broken law. Pause then a while, and duly consider who the Redeemer is, and what he hath done. Then will you necessarily conclude, that whatever the world admires as excellent, and extols as most valuable, is unspeakably mean when put in the balance against the worth of the soul.

It is indeed a matter of the utmost difficulty, to believe that one in every perfection equal with the eternal Father should abase himself to the cross, and shed his blood on it to ransom the soul. Here reason with all its efforts is lost in the unfathomable depth of mystery; and if left to itself, would lead into perpetual cavil, if not to a flat denial of the reality of the fact. The method used to prevent such a denial, which would be blasphemy against God and perdition to ourselves, still more forcibly adds evidence to the worth of the soul. For the same eternal Spirit which in the beginning brought light out of darkness, and order and beauty out of chaos, comes down from heaven to bear witness of Redemption. "He shall glorify me," saith the Redeemer, "for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." John xvi. 14. In other words, it is his office so to display the glory of the person, righteousness, and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, that those truths, which are foolishness to the reason of the natural man, may be discerned in all their excellency. This eternal Spirit (called the Spirit of Truth, because the only effectual teacher of divine truth,) is continually present with the church of Christ, by his illumination to make known the things which are freely given us of God.

Judge then, what must be the excellency of that immortal principle within you, which in its original birth is the offspring of the God of Glory, and impressed with his own image; then the purchase of the blood of his Son: and now the pupil of the Holy Ghost. When nobility stoops to the office of teaching, no one of less dignity than the heir of a kingdom must be the scholar. How great then must be the excellency of the soul, which has the Spirit of God for its appointed instructor and continual guide?

It will still further prove the worth of the soul, to consider that amazing elevation of glory to which it will be advanced, or that dire extremity of woe in which it will be plunged hereafter. Soon as the few years allotted for its education and trial here on earth expire, if grace and the offers of salvation have been duly accepted and improved, it will gain admission into the city of the living God; where shines an everlasting day; where every thing is removed for ever that might but tend to excite fear, or for a moment to impair the completeness of felicity. And whilst the soul possesses a magnificent habitation, eternal in the heavens, the company with which it will be associated, in excellency far surpasses all the glories of its place of abode. Man, by revolting from God, was banished from any commerce with the glorious spirits that people the invisible world. But when the designs of grace are accomplished in the soul, it becomes a partaker of all the invaluable privileges and dignities of the angels. It is clothed with a brightness of glory refulgent as the sun, it is raised to such degrees of excellency as exceed our highest reach of thought; every defect and blemish inherent in its present condition is done away, and its moral perfections surpass in splendor the outward beauty with which it is arrayed. Now, if we estimate the grandeur of

a person from the exalted station he is born to bear, and the possessions he shall one day call his own, how great must the worth of the soul be judged, which, unless ruined by its own incorrigible sinfulness, is to inherit the riches of eternity; to stand before the throne of Jehovah on a rank with angels; to drink of rivers of pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore.

It is, on the other hand, evidence equally strong, of the value of the soul, though, alas! of a very melancholy and distressing kind, with which the Scripture account of the extreme misery it must suffer if it perishes, furnishes us. If it is not counted worthy to be admitted, through the Saviour's mediation, into glory; O sad alternative! its doom, like the sentence pronounced on some offender of great dignity, whose distinction serves only to inflame his guilt, is full of horror. It is cut off from all communion with God; removed to an inconceivable distance; separated by an unpassable gulf. It must have him for the avenger of its crimes, in comparison of whose strength all created might is weaker than a new-born babe. That arm is to be stretched forth against it, which shoots the planets in their rounds, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. The soul that perishes, is to suffer the punishment prepared for the devil and his angels; to suffer punishment, the very same in kind with that of the avowed enemy of the blessed God; whose business, whose only joy ever since his fall from heaven, hath been to defeat, if it were possible, all God's designs of grace; to undermine his kingdom, and tread his honor in the dust; who has already seduced souls without number, and who will go on in his course of treason and enmity against God, till the day of executing full vengeance on him is come. Though not in equal torment, yet in the same hell with this execrable being, is the soul that perishes to endure the wrath of God.

Whether you regard therefore the felicity or the ruin, which the soul of man in a few fleeting years must experience, you will find it hard to determine which of the two most forcibly bespeaks its grandeur.

These evidences, obvious to every eye which reads the Scripture page, prove, in a manner not to be questioned, that the poorest beggar carries greater wealth in his own bosom, and possesses a higher dignity in his own person, than all the world can give him. The soul, that enables him to think and choose, surpasses in worth all that the eye ever saw or the fancy ever imagined. Before one such immortal being, all the magnificence of the natural world appears diminutive, because transitory. All these things wax old, as doth a garment, and all the works of nature shall be burnt up; but the years of the soul, its happiness or its woe, like the unchangeable God its creator, endure for ever.

From these evidences, you will perceive, that the schemes which engage the attention of eminent statesmen and mighty kings, nay, even the delivery of a nation from ruin and slavery, are trifles when set in competition with the salvation of a single soul. You will see the propriety of that astonishing assertion, that in heaven, the seat of glory, and among angels, whose thoughts can never stoop to any thing little, "There is joy over one sinner that repenteth." You will see why the Lord God Almighty is at so much pains (if the expression may be used) to awaken the children of men into a just concern for the salvation of their souls; why the warnings he gives them are so solemn, his calls so repeated and pressing, and his entreaties so affectionate. All these things follow as the just and natural conclusions from the matchless excellency of the soul.



## SUNDAY II.—CHAP. II.

## THE ADVANTAGES OF A JUST CONVICTION OF THE SOUL'S EXCELLENCY.

THE incomparable excellency of the soul has been attempted to be shown by various proofs. A *clear, strong, and abiding conviction of this excellency* is the foundation of all real religion, and on many accounts is indispensably necessary.

For want of a just perception of the worth of the soul, the amusements of folly and the pleasures of sin are looked upon by the young as the chief sources of delight. They are shy of religion, notwithstanding its promises of peace, of joy, of eternal life; and they regard it as a malevolent enemy to their happiness. But no sooner do they once truly apprehend the excellency of the soul, than acquaintance with spiritual objects is sought after and highly valued. Thus informed, the language even of youthful hearts is this: "The bloom of my days and the vigor of my life shall be devoted to my best, my everlasting interest. A sight of the worth of my soul has delivered me from the fascinating power of polluting lusts, and has broken all the magic force of their cruel enchantments."

The same knowledge of the worth of the soul is absolutely necessary to preserve men inviolably *honest* amidst the temptations which abound in trade, and in every profession. For on the Exchange, in the University, the coffee-house, in almost every circle of private company, infectious discourse in praise of riches and honor is poured forth, and contaminates the principles of those who hear it. From the worldly lusts natural to man thus inflamed spring all the diseases of trade.—Hence the extortion, the falsehood, the imposition, the spirit of extravagant speculation, by which the character and the peace of thousands are ruined.—They are endangered by a rage for money, and a boundless desire of filthy lucre. Nothing can control this wide-spreading evil, but a perception of the soul's inestimable worth. Let this take place, and immediately the deformity of the former false, defiling ideas of worldly advancement and gain is discovered. Trade will then be carried on with temperance of affection. An enlightened conscience, like a vigilant sentinel, will sound an alarm in every hour of danger; it will keep the man of trade and merchandise punctually true to his best, his greatest interest, and enable him with ease to conquer those temptations which before led him away captive; "What," he will say, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The necessity of a strong and abiding perception of the worth of the soul, appears also from this consideration, that it is the only *ground of real prayer*, and the cause of its success. In addresses from man to man hypocrisy is detestable: how much more in addresses from man to God! But how is it possible prayer can be any thing more than hypocrisy, when the supplicant is not impressed with a due sense of the worth of his soul! Who can deprecate the wrath revealed against sin, implore deliverance from its defilement, or earnestly entreat a supply of his spiritual wants, who does not perceive the worth of the soul? In the nature of things we can have no deep concern, where we apprehend no great misery if we fail of success, or advantage, if we are crowned with it. We may indeed personate in our closets or at church, a man in earnest pursuit of spiritual blessings; and be constant in the use of those very prayers which such a one, with the noblest sensibility, would pour out before his God. But unless we feel the same spirit, through the same knowledge of the excellency of the soul, we

only act a part in the closet or in the church, as a player does on the stage: we appear in a character which is no more our own, than that of the king or hero on the stage is his. Hence multitudes constantly engaged in acts of devotion, remain grossly ignorant, and utterly unaffected by every thing which they profess to believe, and day by day seem to implore: their confessions are deceitful, their prayers void of fervor, and their thanksgivings without gratitude. But such devotion must be as unsuccessful as it is insincere. God is a God of truth. He must receive services just as they are; and where nothing but outward homage and fine words are offered to him, nothing is obtained. Sin is not pardoned, nor evil tempers subdued. All the fruit of such feigned intercourse with the God of heaven is to flatter self-love, and to harden men in presumption, till their hypocrisy is at once fully discovered and punished.

On the contrary, are you conscious of the worth of your soul? This will dispose you for every devout exercise. Godly sorrow for sin will accompany the confession of it, when lamented as an enemy to your best, your immortal interest. Ardent and urgent will be the pleadings for grace and pardon, when their importance, as connected with a soul of inestimable worth, is seen and felt. Most hearty and affectionate will be the thanksgivings for mercies already vouchsafed, when every instance of favor from above is considered as a pledge of the eternal felicity of the soul.

It follows, therefore, that in the same degree in which it is necessary to resist temptations to evil, or profitably to engage in the solemn acts of religion, it is necessary also to be impressed with the worth of the soul.

The natural result of such an impression will be a diligent care for the salvation of the soul.

Now the *supreme wisdom of such carefulness* is most evident from comparing *beauty, honor, knowledge, riches, or whatever else* is usually valued amongst men, with the soul.

The elegant *lovely form*, which captivates the eye of almost every beholder, and fills the mind that possesses it with perpetual vanity, ill rewards the anxious carefulness used to preserve it. No cautious attention, no human power or skill, is able to protect it from the waste of time, the blast of sickness, or the untimely stroke of death.

The place of *honor*, and the name of applause, for which thousands are glad to sacrifice their ease and sell their liberty, is of little value, since it is subject to all the caprice of fickle-minded men.—How many, once the favorites of a court, the idols of a kingdom, have lived to see all their blooming honors wither, and their names sink into oblivion, if not contempt.

Are you ambitious to climb the envied summit of *literary fame*; and shine without a rival in the acquisition of knowledge? In one fatal hour, a paralytic stroke, a violent fever, may disorder the structure of your brain, rifle all the cells of knowledge, and wipe away from your memory the very traces of all that has been committed to its keeping. Thus you may be left the sad survivor of yourself: a mortifying spectacle to human pride; a melancholy, but irresistible proof, how much men may rate the attainment of human knowledge higher than its precarious tenure justifies.

If your great aim is to *become rich*, of chief eminence in your trade, able to command all outward things which can minister to your vanity or pleasure, still how unworthy of your supreme desire and care is such a condition, because absolutely *inscenre*! Life itself, the foundation of all temporary enjoyments, is but as a beauteous vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away.—

Each day, we know, is translating some of the opulent sons of industry, into a world, where not a mite of all their gain can follow them.

Nay, if you are engrossed by the care of providing for those tender pledges of God's love to you, the *offspring of your own body*, whom you were a monster of cruelty to neglect; yet here you may be suddenly, be wholly disappointed. Your darling child, the living image of yourself, how unable are you to preserve its invaluable life from perils, and from fierce disease! When parted from you on visit or some business, you may, like Sisera's fond mother, be chiding its delay, and with all the impatience of love, asking, Wherefore is my son or daughter, so long in coming? whilst some appointment of God has taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke.

Thus, if you take a full survey of every thing which the children of men seek with greatest anxiety to enjoy; compared with a supreme concern for the salvation of the soul, and steady regard to its interests, how vain is it? Nay, whatever it be, except the soul, about which you are careful, it has this most degrading circumstance attending it, it has the condition only of an annuity for life; each successive year makes a considerable decrease in its value, and at death the whole is at an end for ever.

But if your principal care and solicitude is for the salvation of your soul, all the unexpected disasters, disappointments and losses which harass the sinful children of men, will become affecting proofs of the supreme wisdom of your choice, and the unrivalled excellency of your pursuit. Even the tears that stream down the cheeks of the miserable, and the complaints of those who are disappointed in worldly schemes, will pronounce you blessed, who are athirst for your immortal soul's salvation. Are you conscious of its worth? Are you striving in daily intercourse with God, its Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, to secure its eternal welfare? Then you may set all the evils that terrify the human race at defiance. Your inferior dying part they may wound, but they cannot strike deep enough, or reach high enough, to hurt your soul. In the midst of what otherwise would prove ruin unsupportable, your wise choice will cover you like armor, and render you invulnerable.

Are you *poor*, and treated with scorn by the sons of pride, you will have examples and prospects more than sufficient to support you. You will see your own case in the instructive history of the saints of God, who are destitute and afflicted; and in that wonderful contrast of meanness and grandeur, extreme poverty and immense wealth, the dying Lazarus. With patience, with gladness of heart, you will see, that the deepest distress, and the surest title to glory, may be for a small moment united.—In every case where proper care for the soul hath prevailed, you will see that poverty, however extreme, sufferings, however long and grievous add both to the weight and brightness of future glory.

In sickness, also, the supreme wisdom of having been careful above all things for your soul, will display itself with peculiar lustre. For though health is absolutely essential to a sensitive happiness;—though the least ache, or bodily disorder, deprives the proud and worldly-minded of their enjoyments, yet the soul, if with due care it has been exercised in the ways appointed by God, finds sources from whence to derive consolation under the most violent pressures; consolation sufficient to banish both outward impatience and inward dejection from their accustomed throne, the chamber of sickness and pain. With a lovely and edifying meekness, you will regard such discipline, though trying to sense, and oppressive to the flesh, as prepared by

the allwise and merciful Refiner, to purge away every base mixture that still cleaves to and defiles your soul. The welfare of your soul, dearer to you than all external comforts, will induce you to welcome the visitations, which are of such sovereign use to promote its health. In short, in sickness the whole man is a miserable sufferer, where the soul has been forgotten; where earnestly cared for, and instructed in divine truth, the inferior part alone feels the pressure.

To advance still farther; *death*, the detector of all cheats—death, the touchstone of all true worth, and therefore the king of terrors to those whose care every thing has shared but their souls, even death itself will confirm the supreme wisdom of your conduct. The death-bed, on which the gay, the prosperous, and the noble, lay down their heads appalled and confounded, is the theatre for displaying the fortitude of those who have sought, as the one thing needful, the salvation of their souls. The former are confounded, because unprepared. The loss of all they valued is coming upon them; their approaching change can *promise* them nothing; it is much if it forebode not dreadful consequences.—But to the latter, every thing wears another aspect. Must the world be left by them? It has been already renounced and vanquished. Must all temporal good be forsaken for ever? How placid, how calm the surrender, when the riches of eternity are theirs; no striving, no querulous repining against the irresistible summons to depart, when that very departure has been habitually expected as a translation of the soul to its proper everlasting happiness.

In fact, dying Christians, that is, all that have duly sought in a right method, the salvation of their souls, have given proofs of the supreme wisdom of their conduct in the hour of nature's sorrow and distress; so that those fine lines of Dr. Young, are most justly descriptive of the happy few, whose souls have been more precious to them than every temporal concern or comfort.

The chamber where the good man meets his fate  
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven;  
Heav'n waits on the last moment; owns her friends  
On this side death, and points them out to men,  
A lecture silent, but of sovereign power. \*

All these advantages, arising from supreme carefulness for the salvation of the soul, are still more worthy of regard, because *not at all uncertain*.—You may be braving the thickest dangers of the field of war, to get the name of valor and the place of command; yet fall an early victim in the bloody battle, or after it your services may be neglected.—You may burn with inextinguishable ardor, to stand high in the rank of scholars, and ruin your health by intense study, yet die mortified at the littleness of your reputation. Your labor to succeed in business may be incessant, yet through a thousand circumstances which you have no power to prevent, you may repeatedly suffer disappointment, and poverty still remain your portion. The favor of patrons, friends, relations, may be assiduously courted, and appear promising to your earnest wishes; and yet others may supplant you, and, receiving the benefits you were grasping in idea, make the very name of patron, friend, relation, odious to you. The world is every day exhibiting instances of bitter disappointment, in each of the cases above described.

But if with all the strength of desire you have sought for the salvation of your soul, through Jesus.



Christ, you have nothing to do with the changes ever incident to the things of time and sense. You have to do with the blessed God, in whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning. You may be therefore rich, or you may be poor: raised, or depressed; beloved, or slighted by those on whom you are dependent; you may enjoy health, or be oppressed with mortal disease, whilst in each state were you to ask yourself, what course could I have best taken for my present peace and felicity? Reason, conscience, Scripture, will all reply, the very course you have taken, that of caring, in the first place, for the salvation of your soul.

To say no more; the *quick succession of years*, which exceedingly impoverish, as they pass by, every man whose soul is not his chief care, will, on the contrary, be accumulating for you the true riches. Like a prudent factor, who, instead of lavishing his gain in present luxury, yearly remits it home, that he may return to enjoy life in his native country, after all his toils, with ease and honor; so will you be growing rich towards God; sure to return, by death, to that happy country, where, amidst congratulating saints and angels, you shall enter upon the possession of an inheritance prepared for your soul, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

### SUNDAY III.—CHAP. III.

#### THE SCRIPTURE CHARACTER OF GOD.

THE first duty of a Christian is to conceive of God only according to the revelation which he has given of himself: to meditate on this revelation with humility, diligence, and prayer, not daring to indulge fallacious reasonings, lest he should form an imaginary god, and then worship the creature of his own brain.

Nor will such an absolute submission of the understanding to revelation, in this matter, be thought in the least grievous or dishonorable, when it is considered, that of ourselves and in our present state of darkness and corruption, we are utterly unable to form any just conceptions of the divine nature and perfections. When once we forsake the guidance of Scripture, we are left to uncertain guesses; we put ourselves in the condition of the unenlightened heathen; and their errors, on this most important subject, as universal as they were lamentable, are a sufficient evidence of the short-sightedness and vanity of unassisted reason, and of the ignorance of man in the things of God.

I shall therefore present you with a transcript of what the sacred oracles have delivered to us, on this important point of belief. In absolute submission to them, I shall endeavor to delineate the character of the blessed God, as drawn by himself, and explain his nature and will, his acts and providences, his decrees and purposes, as exhibited in the Bible. Thus, knowing the God with whom we have to do, we may be faithful to the light he hath given us, and regulate our conduct towards him, by the infallible standard of his own plain and positive declarations. And may he himself render them effectual to enlighten the understanding; so that every reader, in the devout fervor of his soul, may cry out before him, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints; who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

In the first place, the Scripture represents God, as possessed of the incommunicable perfection of *eternal existence*. All other beings once were not: there was a period when the most excellent of them first began to exist; and the same power which gave

them life, could again reduce them to their original nothing.

On the contrary, God has ever existed; the same in essence, felicity, and perfection: from all eternity he has been what he now is, and what he will eternally remain. The existence of things which are seen, compels us to acknowledge this incompressible truth; and agreeable to it is his own account of his eternal power and Godhead: "I AM," saith he, "that I AM—The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," is his title. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were formed, from everlasting to everlasting he was God."

Nearly allied to this perfection of eternal existence, is the *unchangeableness* of God. His love and hatred remain immutably the same towards their respective objects. "I am the Lord, I change not," is one of those sovereign titles by which he manifests himself to us: with him "is no variability, neither shadow of turning." In proof of this excellency, God is called a *rock*. This metaphor intimates, that as a rock continues steadfast and immoveable, whilst the surrounding ocean is in a perpetual fluctuation: so though all the creatures of God, from the lowest to the very highest of the intelligent kind, are subject to change; capable of new additions or alterations with respect to their knowledge, their power, or their blessedness; God alone is absolutely the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

God is a *Spirit*. The distinguishing properties of spirit, are understanding and will, consciousness and activity. By virtue of these properties, every spiritual substance differs totally from dead matter or body, and is infinitely superior to it in its nature and essence. But though this difference between spiritual substances and those of matter, is sufficient to help our weak conceptions; yet we are taught in Scripture, that the ever-living God surpasses in excellence all created spirits, infinitely more than they do, in their nature and properties, merely animal substances. For God not only declares of himself that he is a spirit, but that he is "the Father of spirits, and the God of the spirits of all flesh." It follows, therefore, that it is not sufficient merely to conceive that God is a spirit, meaning, by that name, a living, intelligent, and active being, essentially distinguished from the material frame our eyes behold: for though this is most truly affirmed of him, yet must you add to him perfections, which no other spirits possess; as well as separate from him every kind of imperfection which adheres to them. They exist within certain limits, they are ignorant of many things, they are defective in power; but the Father of spirits himself, is omnipresent, and infinite alike in knowledge and in power.

God is *omnipresent*. The universe, which owes its formation and existence entirely to his creating power, is not only governed, but is continually sustained by him. The whole immeasurable frame of nature must therefore be pervaded by his all-enlivening influence. Accordingly, this most grand and majestic interrogation is put by himself to the children of men: "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Jer. xxiii. 24. And in the cxxxixth Psalm, this perfection of God is described with equal sublimity and force. The enlightened and inspired prophet begins with making the inquiry, whether it was possible for him to hide himself from the Author of his being and the former of all things: "Whither," says he, "shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?—If I ascend up into heaven," into the regions above the firmament, "thou art there;" I should not only find myself still within the limits of thy sovereign dominion, but under thy immediate inspection.—

"If I make my bed in hell," that is, plunge myself into the unknown mansions of the dead, and the worlds invisible, where even imagination loses itself in darkness, "behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;" if, with the swiftness of the rays of the rising sun, I could in an instant convey myself to the uttermost part of the western world, the wings of the morning are not swift enough to carry me from thy pursuing hand; "even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me;" I shall exist in thee, O God! thy presence will be diffused around me, thy enlivening power will support my frame. "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me, yea the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and light are both alike to thee." I myself, my actions and circumstances, are equally conspicuous in the thickest shades of night, as in the brightest splendors of the noon-day sun. The universe is the temple of the Lord, and every part of it is filled with his presence. And as the Scripture thus forcibly describes the presence of God with all things actually existing, so it expressly teaches us, that vast as the dimensions of the creation are, they do not bound or circumscribe his being. With holy admiration, we are commanded to say unto God, "Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee!" 1 Kings viii. 27.

To this amazing perfection of God, his omnipresence, is joined *almighty power*. A human artist, or created agent, can only fashion his work from materials already prepared for him, and which he cannot make: but the glorious God commands things into being. He was not beholden to pre-existent matter in the formation of the world; for "the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." On the contrary, all things, whether of a material or spiritual nature, stood up before the mighty God at his call, and were created at his pleasure. The heavens, and all the host of them; the earth, and all things which are therein, are not only the work of his hands, but by the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth: "I the Lord," saith he, "have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

The same almighty power of God, to which the whole creation owes its birth, is manifested also in the disposition and preservation of the world in order and harmony. Thus the exertions of the almighty power of God are continually placed before us. "He watereth the earth, and blesseth the increase of it. He covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth: he giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; he divideth the sea with his power, and layeth up the depths in store-houses: fire and hail, storm and tempest, fulfil his word."

The steady course of nature, which thoughtless and profane men are wont to consider as the effect of necessity, rather than of all-wise direction, is wholly owing, we are taught, to the almighty power of God. "It is he alone," saith the Scripture, "who makes the day-spring know its place, and stretcheth out the shadows of the evening—that commands the sun to shine by day, and the moon by night: that prepares a place for the rain, and a way for the lightning and thunder—that maketh the herbs to grow upon the earth. The hand of the Lord doth all these things."

It must further be observed, that the Scripture gives us the most awful idea of the boundless power which belongeth to God, by declaring, that he can in a moment dissolve the whole frame of nature.

Human force is at much pains to demolish, what before it toiled to erect: but the might of the most high God can, with greater ease than we can admit the thought, change the face of the creation, and destroy what seems to be built on the most stable foundation. "He removeth the mountains, and they know it not; he overturneth them in his anger. He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. He shaketh the earth out of its place, and the pillars thereof tremble. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence."

But in the attributes of mere power, however boundless and irresistible, there is no loveliness. We may indeed be astonished, and tremble before it, but to contemplate it with pleasure, and to conceive of it as the object of delight and of trust, we must behold it in union with other perfections. In union with such perfections it subsists in the blessed God; for he is as infinite in *knowledge* as he is in power. More clearly does he discern his own eternity, than we our temporary duration: more perfectly his own immensity, than we our limited condition of being: more certainly his own extent of wisdom and power, than we the thoughts which are passing through our own minds.

But if God knows himself, he must know also the work of his own hands; for even the meanest artificer, though imperfectly acquainted with the nature of the materials on which he works, knows the effects of his own operations. Since, therefore, from the greatest to the least, from the utmost circuit of heaven to the centre of the earth, there is nothing which the hand of God has not formed, and which his providence does not direct; every thing must be thoroughly known to him. Wherever his power works, there his understanding must discern. The vast fabric therefore of the universe, with all its laws and furniture, with all events from first to last, are known unto him. The innumerable host of sinless angels, and the world of fallen apostate ones; the long progeny of mankind, with all the thoughts, desires, and designs that have been in the mind of each individual, and all the words which have ever fled from their lips, fall under his continual notice. He, with the most exact and infallible comprehension, knows all the active principles of the spirits he has formed; how they will be moved upon the presence of every object which can come before them; in what manner they will act upon every temptation which can try them, and in every circumstance in which they can possibly be placed. These ideas of the blessed God his own oracles teach us to conceive. "The ways of man are before the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. The eyes of the Lord are in every place: he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; he knoweth the things that come into our mind, every one of them. There is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do."

And as God is perfect in knowledge, so is he in the attribute of *wisdom*, which is the best exercise and improvement of knowledge. By virtue of this quality he superintends and so adjusts all the parts of the universe, that, whatever changes any of them may undergo, their usefulness and connection with each other may be uniformly maintained. By the exercise of the same attribute he often accomplishes his designs, through means, to human apprehension, the most unlikely. He founds the manifestation of his glory upon what a depraved world despises and derides: and, in the glaring



weakness of his agents, *perfects*, that is, displays his *own praise*. He entangles the rulers of darkness in their own nets, and ruins their designs by their own stratagems; the greatest cruelty of Satan and his instruments, he makes subservient to the designs of his mercy, and overrules even the apostacy of Adam, to display his own manifold wisdom to angels and to men. "He has established the world in his wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by his discretion. He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that they cannot perform their enterprizes. His counsels stand for ever, and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation."

These perfections, called, by way of distinction, the *natural* perfections of God, the more they are considered, the higher must they raise our wonder and astonishment. Who can meditate on eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, and almighty power, and not feel that they are subjects too big for any created understanding to grasp! But the *moral* perfections of God, we can comprehend with greater clearness. And it is possessed of these, that God claims from us the highest reverence, fear, love, trust, and obedience.

The first of these perfections is *his goodness*. By this we mean that principle of good-will, by virtue of which his almighty power and infinite wisdom are exercised in the liberal communication of happiness to his creatures. His bountiful hand supplies their wants, and pours out his benefits upon them all. He makes no other distinction than what necessarily arises from the different qualities or capacities of the respective objects: no other difference than what his own most perfect character requires should be made. "The Lord," saith the Scripture, "is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. He openeth his hand, and satisfieth every living thing. He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." So strong is his goodness in its propensity, and so wide in its extent, as to bless not simply his creatures, but even rebels against his government, and enemies to his truth. "He causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on the evil and on the good, on the unjust as well as on the just. He endures, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." He allures, and encourages their return to him. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Come now," says he, "and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And, lest these asseverations should not be sufficient to remove suspicions of his willingness to forgive the most enormous offenders, when they turn to him; he swears by himself, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." And that all generations of men, who should ever receive his word, might form the highest conceptions of his glorious goodness, he passed before Moses, and proclaimed this to be his proper title, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin."

But lest his goodness should be so misconstrued as to diminish our apprehensions of the evil of sin; lest it should lead us to imagine, that, where so much favor is shown to the workers of iniquity, there can be no abhorrence of it; the Scripture is

strong, full and frequent in its representations of the *holiness* of God.

By this holiness, is meant, that disposition essential to his perfect nature, which regards the honor of his own divine perfections; and which therefore opposes the violation of his pure will, or the resistance of his just government. As the power of God is opposed to all natural weakness, and his wisdom to the least defect of understanding; so is his holiness opposed to all moral imperfection or sin. It is not to be considered as a single perfection, but rather as the harmony of all the attributes of God; it is therefore called the "beauty of the Lord." Psal. xxvii. Separate from holiness all other excellences of the divine nature would be inglorious. His wisdom might be styled subtlety; his power be only considered as dreadful. On this account those exalted spirits who are best acquainted with the glories of the divine nature, dwell on this perfection. The courts of heaven resound with high adoration, whilst they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." And such a particular regard do we find paid to this attribute by the blessed God himself, that he swears by it, in confirmation of the promises of grace; "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David." Psal. lxxxix. 35.

Connected with this divine perfection of holiness in God, is the *continual notice* he takes of the behavior of each individual towards himself and his law. On this part of his character the necessity of our absolute subjection depends. For were God either ignorant of what is done by men on earth, or did he judge it insignificant, we should have no more cause to retain any awe of him upon our minds, or to impose any restraint upon ourselves, than if there were no God. It is not the existence of a God, but his moral government of the world, that calls for our fear, and should excite us to obedience. To take away, therefore, all ground of suspecting any inattention in our Creator to our behavior, arising from his own infinite greatness, and our being less than nothing compared to him—to root out this pernicious opinion, which the desire of sinning with impunity might lead us to cherish; the glorious God teaches us to conceive of him, as taking the most exact cognizance of all our inward tempers, no less than our outward deportment, and that with an unchangeable purpose to deal with us accordingly. In the nervous language of his own inspired penmen, "His eyes behold, and his eye-lids try the children of men. The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed. I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

And lest, from the present outward prosperity of the wicked, any should be unreasonable and base enough to conclude, that God is not such an exact observer of our behavior, respecting himself and his law; the Scriptures are full of this alarming truth, which entirely removes the objection; that "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad—that he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness—that every man shall receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or bad."

But it is not only at the conclusion of this world's duration, and in the day of universal judgment, that God makes a difference between those that serve him, and those that refuse subjection to his laws. God represents himself as continually exercising peculiar and "distinguishing love to his faithful and obedient people," whilst he is insupportably terrible to his obstinate opposers. He is not content with giving to the former, assurances

of his good-will towards them, and of their future glory in the eternal world: he declares, that he will maintain with them even here, an intercourse of the most delightful kind. He will give them such views of the glory of his nature, the excellency of his truth, and the tenderness of his love, as the ungodly and careless neither know nor can conceive. In every season of extraordinary temptation, he is secretly enduing their souls with strength, and giving them power to return from every combat triumphing in conquest, and from every trial enriched with more grace. A considerable part of Scripture is taken up with representing the peculiar favor and loving-kindness of God to his faithful servants. A few passages will give us just conceptions of this part of the character of the most high God: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ear is open to their cry. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way—though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand, for the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved for ever. The Lord is a light and defence, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that lead a godly life. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. The Lord sitteth above the water-floods, the Lord remaineth a king for ever. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will give his people the blessing of peace. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

The substance of these inestimable mercies, is most emphatically expressed in the New Testament, and confirmed afresh, as the portion of all true believers. "If any man love me," saith our Lord, "he will keep my commandments; and I and the Father will love him, and will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The enjoyment of such a peculiar manifestation of God's love is used by the inspired St. Paul as a most cogent argument, to engage men, even at a time of extreme peril and approaching persecution, to forsake the idolatrous religion of their parents: "Wherefore," saith he, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Weigh well the import of these declarations of favor to the children of faith, and you will see, in the clearest light, how much the God of heaven and earth regards the conduct of every individual of mankind, who faithfully receives his truth. He is not ashamed to call himself, in every instance, the friend of such, their portion, their father, their exceeding great reward. He is not ashamed to engage his own word and oath, that he will never leave them nor forsake them; but, on the contrary, that he will crown all his goodness towards them here, by calling them up hereafter to his immediate presence and glory.

On the other hand, it is as striking a demonstration of the notice which God takes of men's practice and deportment, that he will *punish in the most awful manner those who are enemies to his government*, and despise his authority. Hear in what terms he proclaims his hatred of iniquity, and his unchangeable purpose to execute vengeance upon sinners; and doubt, if you can, whether God is concerned to maintain his own honor. "The Lord your God, is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not

persons, nor taketh rewards. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand lay hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to my enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces, out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be their portion to drink: for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance will behold the thing that is just. The Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots; like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire; for by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. And they shall go forth, and look upon the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

To comment on these nervous expressions would be to enfeeble them. To suppose them figurative expressions, in such a sense as not most emphatically to affirm God's utter abhorrence of sin, and his determined purpose to cast into hell those who die in their sins, is, in fact, to contradict them. Instead of cavilling at them, or vainly endeavoring to explain them away, let us receive them with awe and fear. This is the end which they are intended to produce. "Hear ye, and give ear, for the Lord hath spoken: behold, I will execute judgment; vengeance is mine, I will repay."

If any additional proof were wanting to confute the false and dangerous opinion of those who vainly suppose the Deity to be all mercy; and who pretend to be shocked at the notion of a God who will not let the wicked pass unpunished; it may be derived from the attestations of our Saviour—yes, the only-begotten of the Father, who cannot deceive, who has shown the perfection of benevolence towards sinners, since he laid down his life for them on the cross; he has confirmed, by his own declaration, all the denunciations of wrath above-mentioned. He declares, that in the last day, all nations shall be gathered before him, and at that most solemn time, in the hearing of the whole rational creation, he will say to all them on the left hand, that is, to the vast multitudes of obstinate and incorrigible sinners, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

#### SUNDAY IV.—CHAP. IV.

##### THE CHARACTER OF GOD EXEMPLIFIED.

In our last chapter we have the character of God given by his own inspired penmen. We have seen that they represent him as a being merciful, and yet just, merciful, even abounding in grace towards his obedient children; but just to those who despise him, in bringing upon them all the curses written in his book. By this disposition towards both, he appears infinitely holy and reverend, and his character gives the greatest encouragement to the exercise of faith in his name, and to the practice of righteousness for his sake.

But if the character of God were only marked out to us by his own declarations, we should be apt (such is our nature) to be only faintly impressed by it. To give it weight sufficient to regulate our practice, the character must be made still more conspicuous by actions. There must be facts, established upon such authority, that we can no more question their truth, than if with our own eyes we had seen them performed: facts expressive of the



very same perfections in God, which his word declares he possesses. Accordingly, the method of God's procedure, both with angels and men, is an additional, and the strongest confirmation possible that he is good, merciful, and holy; that he abounds in love towards his faithful people, but is the dreadful avenger of iniquity.

With respect to the *goodness of God*, it shines forth in all the excellences which *angels* possess; and all the bliss they inherit, who have never fallen from God, nor left that glorious habitation he of his bounty provided for them.

On *man*, as he came immediately out of the hands of his Creator, and whilst he stood in his first estate, the signaures of the divine goodness were so strongly impressed, as to excite envy in one who had himself experienced the happiness of angels.—Adam was created full of light and knowledge, of purity and peace, of delight and blessedness. He was formed in the image of God; he was invested with dominion over the animal creation. He was not only conscious of the favor of his infinitely powerful and beneficent Creator, but he was admitted to hold personal communion with him. Thus was he made only a little lower than the angels themselves, who shouted for joy at the display of the goodness of God, manifested in the happiness of man. In this state of perfection Adam stood; he was put in possession of it for himself and all his progeny; incapable of forfeiting or diminishing it but by his own wilful apostacy.

Now, who can consider this account of man's original happiness, and not admire the benevolence of him who was the author of it? Who can survey the riches of the inheritance provided for Adam, compared to which, the glory of Solomon was but as the wretchedness of a captive exile, and not adore the infinite goodness of the Creator?

Again; when Adam, through the envy and malice of the devil operating in a manner too mysterious for us to comprehend, revolted against his Maker, and requited his bounty with the execrable insult of believing Satan to be a better friend to his welfare than God; though the hideous deed could not but draw innumerable miseries after it; yet, even then, behold the goodness of God shined brighter than it did ever at the first creation, and "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." God instantly revives our most criminal and desponding parents with a promise of salvation. He promises, O astonishing love! *to send an invincible deliverer into the world, even His own Son!* To send him into the world not to receive the worship due unto his name; not to be adored by every heart, as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, but to be defamed as a confederate with Satan, crucified as a blasphemer, and to die, being made a curse for us. "Herein is love! not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Could God say of his most corrupt and idolatrous people, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together?" What then must be the workings of his love towards his own Son, the perfect image of himself, when he "delivered him up for our offences?" when he seemed as it were to divest himself of the qualities of a father towards his son, and, for our sakes, to carry himself towards him only as a judge. "Herein God commendeth his love:" he places it in the most advantageous point of light in which it can possibly be seen by angels or by men, "in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The conclusion arising from this amazing demonstration of goodness and mercy, the sending his Son "to suffer for the unjust, and to bear our sins in his own body on the tree;"

the conclusion is irresistible. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

And as the great God has thus by his actions proved himself to be good and merciful, so has he in the same way demonstrated that *he is a holy God*. For once, his word informs us, there was war in heaven, "Satan and his angels" rising up in enmity against their Maker. The criminals, from the brightness of glory which they possessed, were called "stars of heaven;" (Rev. xii. 4.) yet, no sooner did they sin, than they were stripped of all their honors, and clothed with shame and everlasting contempt: from the height of happiness they were plunged into an abyss of misery; between them and God an impassable gulf was fixed, so that no means of reconciliation will be ever found, no terms of peace be ever offered to them. "God," saith St. Peter, "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." This single fact is a sufficient demonstration that the Lord our God is holy. For should a king, famed for wisdom and for mercy, command persons of the first distinction round his throne to be cast into dungeons, and loaded with fetters, refusing ever to look on them again with favor, or hear a word in mitigation of their punishment; must not all his subjects conclude their offence was most detestable? and can we draw any other conclusion, when we read that the God who delighteth in mercy has, in the greatness of his displeasure, cast down from their thrones, where his own hand had placed them, so many shining angels, and made them examples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire?

Another display of the holiness of God, in which all the children of men have been deeply interested, is the *execution of the punishment threatened to Adam* our first father. The threat was, that upon disobedience, he should immediately suffer death. This death consisted in the loss of the image of God, in which he was formed; his body, after some years spent in toil and sorrow, returning to the dust from whence it was taken; and his soul, unless renewed after the image of God, enduring the pains of eternal death. The latter part of the penalty, we trust, he escaped, through the Mediator so graciously revealed to him; but of the accomplishment of the former part, we alas! are witnesses at this very hour. For what have we, in the place of Adam's original power, but weakness and helplessness?—What, for his divine light and knowledge, but brutish ignorance? What, instead of his peace and communion with God, but natural dislike to him, and guilty fears about his intentions concerning us? What, instead of his perfect purity, but a heart so deceitful, and so desperately wicked, that God alone can know it? And, in the place of an Eden, contrived by infinite wisdom for delight and spiritual happiness, what but a world of confusion and sin, a field of battle, a vale of misery!

If you ask, whence comes this total reverse of circumstances between the first man in innocence, and his posterity? God, who in justice ordained it, gives you this awful account of it; "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation—by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." Ponder this in your heart, and you will not be able to refrain from crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts."

Further, the *dreadful execution of God's wrath upon all the world*, puts the holiness of his nature out of dispute. Before the death, even of all the children of those who saw Adam for his sin an outcast from Paradise, the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the windows of heaven are open to destroy the whole human race then upon earth, ex-

cept eight persons. And lest this destruction should not be judged the act and deed of God himself, as the holy governor of the world, and as a punishment for its sin, hear the God of all mercy, the giver of every good and perfect gift, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, hear him declaring his awful purpose and assigning its cause. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. And it repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them."

There is one fact more, so demonstrative of the holiness of God, as to eclipse the destruction of the antediluvian world, the fall of man, the ruin of the apostate angels. For, in all these cases, the sufferers were first actual transgressors and rebels against God. But if you look to the cross of Christ, there you will see the beloved of the Father, one infinitely more holy than the holiest of the angels in heaven, "set forth by God, to be a propitiation for sin, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just," might appear to the eyes of men and angels, glorious in holiness or justice, "and yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus."

We have appealed, and we shall again and again appeal to the death of Jesus upon the cross, yet we hope without tautology; since this marvellous fact, considered in different views, affords the strongest proof of various perfections in God. At present it is urged in demonstration of God's infinite hatred of sin. And in this light it may be well illustrated by a passage of sacred history. In the book of Kings (2 Kings iii. 26.) we read that the Moabites fled before the kings of Israel and Judah, and after a great slaughter were forced with their king, to retire into their city. Here the king, finding himself besieged and reduced to the last extremity, had recourse to an astonishing act to show his distress and his indignation against Israel. He took his eldest son, the heir of his kingdom, and in the sight of his enemies, offered him up for a burnt-offering upon the wall. The action succeeded to his wish; the kings of Israel and Judah were amazed and confounded at the fury which urged him to such a deed, and returned immediately with haste to their own country, as if pursued by a conqueror.

Now this example, taken in one point of view, may be applied to illustrate the subject before us.—For the eternal Father, having used promises and threatenings, judgments and mercies, and still seeing our sins reach up to heaven, besieging as it were his almighty throne, expresses infinite indignation against sin—He takes his only-begotten Son, the heir of all things, the express image of his person, and, in the hearing of heaven and earth, he cries out, "Awake, O sword! and smite my shepherd, the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Should not we, then, always remembering the death of his only-begotten Son, for our transgressions, smite upon our breasts, and go and sin no more?—Should not we serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, feeling, from this fact, that, to impenitent sinners, our God will be a consuming fire.

In the last chapter, we produced from Scripture many declarations of the peculiar love exercised by God towards each individual that walks before him faithfully. For instances to illustrate these we may appeal to the history of his providence, from the earliest ages. Enoch, the seventh in the line of direct descent from Adam, because he was unconquerably attached to the truth and authority of God, in the midst of his rebellious kindred, is taken from them in a way which at once immortalizes his

name, and proclaims the love which God bears to his saints. Before this fact could grow faint or obscure, Noah is lifted up to our observation, like the ark in which he was preserved, for an everlasting memorial, that in the most desolating judgments, the care of each individual saint is with the Most High. In the case of righteous Lot, the same distinguishing love of God is again manifested; and two assertions are made by God upon this occasion, which are most expressive of his character towards his faithful people; the one is, that Sodom itself should have been spared for the sake of only ten righteous, if but so small a number had been found within its walls. The other is, that Lot is hurried away from thence with this declaration, "Haste thee, escape; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither."

And in what other light than as confirmations of the character of God, that he approveth the way of the righteous, and hath in all ages the most tender and affectionate regard for their welfare; in what other light are we to consider the surprising history of the faithful Joseph? the favor showed to Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and to them only of all Israel who came out of Egypt, or the remarkable and numerous deliverances of David from the snares and persecutions of Saul? In what other way are we to improve Elijah's miraculous assumption into heaven, before the eyes of his successor in office the prophet Elisha? What other conclusions are we to draw from the preservation of Daniel in the den of lions, and of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego in the fiery furnace? What are these but witnesses chosen of God, and held up to notice by miracles wrought in their favor, that every obedient servant of God, who copies the pattern they set before him, might know he is, as certainly they were, the object of God's singular care and special love? And though we see not now the course of nature overruled for the deliverance of the faithful, still the comprehensive promise of the unchangeable God abideth sure; "He knoweth them that are his," and will "make all things work together for good to them that love him."

Nor are the facts which attest God's utter hatred of the sin of each individual, few in number or of doubtful import. On the contrary, the record of his actions furnishes us with many awful instances of the immediate execution of justice on daring offenders. There is scarcely a sin which has not been singled out as the object of his wrathful displeasure. Thus Ham, that could mock his father, surprised by accident into intoxication, is accursed; Lot's wife, full of worldly cares, and looking back upon the loss of her property with regret and repining, is turned into a pillar of salt. Envy and aspiring pride bring down immediate destruction upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In Achan's fate, and in Gehazi's leprosy, we see how God abhorred the covetous. Behold, thou infamous advocate for fornication, the javelin of Phinehas avenging God's quarrel upon Zimri and Cosbi; renounce thy fond conceit, that whoremongers will not be judged by God: for see, three-and-twenty thousand persons are cut off by him for this sin in one day. Be astonished at the patience of God towards thee, thou false and lying tongue, when thou readeest that Ananias and Sapphira perished with the breath of falsehood in their lips! Take notice, thou despiser of Jesus, of the doom of thy fellow-criminal Elymas the sorcerer, and of the judicial blindness with which he was smitten while he perverted the way of truth. Understand, ye vain and haughty, from the ignominious death of Herod, that a proud heart is an abomination to the Lord, and that self-exaltation on account of gifts or pre-



eminence of any kind, is what he cannot endure; for behold, the royal deified orator, after the shout of blasphemous applause from the multitude, is immediately smitten by the angel of the Lord, "because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

All these instances, and many more recited in Scripture, prove with irresistible force, that wherever envy or malice, covetousness or pride, profaneness, impurity, or any temper opposite to the law of God prevails, there the wrath of God abideth; and there, unless they are vanquished before death, must it abide for ever.

Such in his natural and moral perfections, such in his government and providence towards his whole rational creation, is the true God. And that *there is only one God*, who is in all, and through all, and over all, the Scripture is most express. "I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God." But then the same Scripture teaches us, that this unity of God is not a unity of person but of essence, in which the Son and the Spirit are comprehended, in glory equal, in majesty co-eternal, with the Father. Without all controversy, great is this mystery of godliness. It must, however, be received: because the Scripture ascribes those very perfections, in which the nature of God surpasses that of created beings, to the Son and the Spirit. Eternity, omnipresence, infinite knowledge, and uncontrollable power, are represented to belong to them: they, therefore, with the Father, are to be worshipped and glorified. This God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is the God of the Christians. Whilst Jews abhor this mystery, whilst Mohammedans persecute it as an abomination, whilst the self-conceited reject it with disdain, the Christian church, acquiescing in the plain word of God, and satisfied with his declarations, dedicates herself to the sacred Three in one. She continually concludes her public worship with professing her desire to partake of the distinct and different blessings, which are imparted to the church from each of these sacred Three, entreating that the "love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, may be with us all."

Having thus concluded our inquiries into the nature and perfections of the most high God, as they are delineated in Scripture, it remains, that we should *examine and prove ourselves*, whether our idea of God is a faithful copy of the Scripture pattern? Let us try whether we do not remain in gross and fatal ignorance of his real character, notwithstanding the complete manner in which he has revealed himself in his own most holy word? Take it by no means for granted, that you really possess the knowledge of God: for thousands who are utterly destitute of it, who entertain notions of his character which are abominable in his sight, thus flatter themselves to their own ruin. Search, therefore, and see whether you heartily acknowledge God to be what he has declared that he is, in those particulars in which pride, the love of sin, or unbelief, are most apt to disfigure his real character.

For instance; do you look upon God as bearing that *perfect abhorrence to all iniquity*, which the Bible affirms he does? Is it a truth steadfastly fixed in your mind, that God is not cruel to the work of his own hands, though he doom every soul of man dying in sin to feel for ever the weight of his indignation? Do you confess from the heart that the sanctions of his government are full of righteousness and glory, though they assure you, that to every hypocrite and unbeliever, our God is a consuming fire?

Again: try yourself, whether you are firmly persuaded, that the God whom you worship is a support and defence to every one that believeth on the name of his Son with an obedient heart? Are you sure that the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, humbleth himself to watch every moment over each individual of the faithful for good, and careth for every one of that character at all times, as a wise father doth for the son that serveth him? Do you believe it as a most certain truth, that God doth indeed dwell with men; and that he giveth to all who are living according to his will, such peace and consolation as the world knoweth not. Finally, try yourself, whether you have affecting views of the love of God, as it manifests itself in the person and offices of the Redeemer, in the influences of the Spirit, and in that communion which God thus holds with all his faithful people?

By such inquiries as these, honestly made, your real knowledge or your ignorance of the God of whom the Bible speaks, will be discovered to yourself. It is in these important points that God has made that revelation of himself, and of his conduct towards us, which the world by wisdom could never have discovered. And in the same proportion as God's own representation of himself and of his designs are believed, you will be really enriched by the knowledge of him. Such a knowledge is inestimable; it possesses virtue to heal the corrupted mind of man, and energy to support it amidst numerous trials, and to keep it firm in the exercise of duty: it is this knowledge, in a word, which is emphatically pronounced by our Saviour to be eternal life.

#### SUNDAY V.—CHAP. V.

##### NATURAL CONDITION OF MAN WITH RESPECT TO GOD.

No Science can be thoroughly known till its first principles are well understood. This observation is never more true than when applied to religion, the science in which every man is most deeply interested. One of the first and most necessary principles of religion is, a knowledge of our own condition and character, especially as we stand related to the Author of our being.

Now, experience and Scripture, those incontestible witnesses, jointly declare "the deplorable blindness of man in spiritual things, while in a state of nature; and his forgetfulness, contempt, nay, even hatred of his Creator."

His *blindness* is manifested by his practical denial of his absolute dependence upon God for all good. He looks upon the endowments of person, mind, or station, as if they were in the proper sense of the word his own; he trusts in his own wisdom and strength to procure them, and when procured, he glories in them as his own acquirement. In words indeed he acknowledges one supreme universal Creator; but he considers not the consequences necessarily flowing from this truth, to the glory of God, "that of him, and through him, and to him are all things." Hence beauty is intoxicated with the admiration of its own pleasing form; hence the rich, proud of their wealth, look with contempt on the poor; and those who have acquired knowledge by intense application, or who shine distinguished by their superior genius, spurn the ignorant vulgar; nay, even the spiritual man is much too ready to exalt himself in the flattering survey of his own gifts and grace. The universal prevalence of this spirit of self-sufficiency loudly proclaims the blindness of the human mind to that fundamental truth, that "no man can receive any thing except it be

given him from above." With respect then to every advantage on which we place a value, "it is God only that maketh men to differ." But so gross is this blindness, and so truly is it a property of our nature, that it is difficult, even with all the aids of supernatural light and divine grace, to obtain deliverance from it. Some symptoms of it may be found (where you least suspected them) even in the most enlightened of the earth.

The natural blindness of man with respect to God, may be proved also by the judgment he makes of a life of obedience, and a life of self-indulgence. Compare these together, and you would not even believe it possible to make a wrong choice. For what is a life of obedience to God? It is paying our allegiance to the wisest, the best of Kings, and duly discharging our filial duty to the most affectionate of Fathers. It is freedom to the fettered soul, and deliverance from passions as base as they are hurtful. It ensures a peaceful enjoyment of mind, which affords no ground for sharp self-upbraidings. It makes a man a blessing to all in close connection with him, effectually restraining him even from the intention to do evil. In prosperity it keeps the mind humble; in adversity, calm and patient: nor can the prospect of death disturb its tranquility, for its hope is full of immortality.—Survey now its contrast, a life of self-indulgence. How depraved, how monstrous is every feature! The whole appears no other than a hideous compound of ignorance, obstinately contradicting infinite wisdom; of contempt shown by a sinful worm to eternal majesty; of ingratitude to bounty the most undeserved; of rebellion aiming its blow against supreme mercy. A life of self-indulgence makes a man afraid to look inwards, or forwards to approaching eternity; it is infectious and full of mischief to others; it is wholly without excuse, and in every view altogether odious.

What light can there be left in the human mind, if a life of obedience is not always, without hesitation, preferred, infinitely preferred, to a life of self-indulgence? For beauty, in its loveliest bloom, doth not so evidently excel pale loathsome disease, as a life of faithful obedience surpasses one of self-gratification.

Yet, alas! to the shame of man, experience daily proves his choice to be fixed on what merits absolute contempt, and his preference to be given where detestation alone is due. Innumerable are the slanders with which man asperses a life of strict obedience, and loud are the complaints he urges against it: he industriously employs all his powers of wit and reason to make a uniform subjection to the will of God appear irksome, and opposition to it guiltless.

In vain do all the children of obedience lift up their voice together, and cry, "Great is the peace that they have who keep thy law, and nothing shall offend them." In vain does the all-sufficient Jehovah promise his in-dwelling presence and Spirit; in vain does he promise pardon, power, peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient; all is too weak to open the eyes of men in general, and to enable them to perceive such pleasure and such charms in the way of duty, as they fondly fancy they discover in the paths of self-will and transgression. And to this gross mistake it is owing, that the number of real Christians is so small, the multitude of open sinners so great.

This observation leads us to a further discovery of the blindness natural to the human mind, with respect to what it esteems the true foundation of happiness. Were it a fact, that great possessions, titles, or appearances could satisfy the soul, it might then be no proof of human blindness to seek for happiness in what the world can give, to the neglect

or disparagement of God: or were we, like the heathen, left in gross darkness about the perfections of God, and in ignorance of the notice he takes of his creatures; on either of these suppositions it would be no evidence of blindness in man to reject, as imaginary, the prospect of finding happiness in the knowledge of God, and in a lively consciousness of his favor. He might plead, that it was the height of arrogance and presumption to imagine there could be an intimacy and friendship between him and God.

But when, on the contrary, the infallible Scriptures fully display to us the glorious perfections of our God, and when they assure us also of the high place man holds in his thoughts; when they declare that his heart is open to embrace him, as soon as he earnestly desires deliverance from sin, and to treat him with all the endearments a son can receive from the most loving father—in such a case must not the mind be deplorably infatuated, if it does not listen with delight to these declarations, place confidence in them, and instantly accept the rich offer made by them as a treasure of peace, of happiness, and glory? Yet alas! far from acting in this most reasonable manner, we are with great difficulty brought to believe that God does indeed dwell with man; and with still greater, to desire any share in communion with him. After a thousand disappointments from the world, still with boundless credulity we depend upon delusion for happiness. The meanest trifle, the most sordid pursuit, every thing except the knowledge and love of God, we are blind enough to fancy worth our esteem and our labor to obtain.

Thus does gross ignorance cover the mind of fallen man. Every inferior creature, even the crawling worm or buzzing insect, perceives what is most beneficial for itself, steadily pursues and constantly adheres to it. But man is naturally blind to the fountain of all good, and to the enjoyment he can possess through the knowledge and love of him. Even men of the finest abilities, whose penetration, in other respects, is piercing as the eagle's sight, are in this point miserably blind. Gross darkness covers the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the priest and the people, till God commands the light to shine out of darkness, and bestows from on high a sound understanding and right judgment.

The blindness of the human mind is most strongly asserted in the following Scriptures, to which more of the same kind, were it necessary, might be added: Job xi. 12. "Man is born like the wild ass's colt," that is, not only destitute of heavenly light and wisdom, but stupid to apprehend it, and averse to receive it. Observe how keenly this is pointed: *like the ass*—an animal remarkable for its stupidity even to a proverb; *like the ass's colt*, which of course must be more egregiously stupid than the dam; *like the wild ass's colt*, which is not only dull, but stubborn and refractory, neither by nature possessing valuable qualities, nor capable of receiving them through any discipline. The same blindness, natural to the human mind, is necessarily implied in those assertions of the Lord Jesus Christ, which ascribe all discernment of spiritual things to the influence of the Holy Ghost: which style him the Spirit of Truth, whose office it is to lead us all into truth. Nay, sufficiently decisive on this point, if there were no other testimony, is that remarkable one of St. Paul: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But it is not blindness only that is chargeable on fallen man; *his entire forgetfulness of God*, even though the *whole creation* loudly attests his excellency and his presence, argues extreme depravity.



Man can be a witness to the whole host of heaven moving in continual order around him; he can enjoy the grateful vicissitude of the seasons, and feast upon the various bounties of the earth; he can stand encircled with conveniences and comforts, and yet not advert to the infinitely wise and gracious hand that made and sustains all things. He excludes God from the government of his own world, because not subject to the observation of his senses, and ascribes the honor due to him, to those passive instruments which only subserve his will. When God, therefore would impress a nation with any heartfelt awe of his agency and rule over the affairs of men, he is compelled to send forth his judgments on the earth, which, like a glaring comet troubling the sky with its irregular motion and portentous appearance, may arrest the attention, alarm the fears, and lead the thoughts of man to his Maker. When he would recover an individual from that deep forgetfulness of him in which he lies by nature, he must change his prosperity into trouble, and his joy into heaviness; he must confine him to a chamber of sickness, or on a bed of languishing must teach him to know himself; he must scourge him with pain, or by fearful apprehensions of impending punishment must awaken the sleeper into sensibility. Still, however, even after these severe monitors have faithfully performed their office, and forcibly set before man his adorable Creator, the remembrance of him, alas! is apt to pass away like that of a guest which tarries but a day.

It passes away, though all nature unites to exhibit him to the senses. "Whilst the sun, clothed in transcendent brightness, comes forth from his chamber every morning to publish his Maker's glory; whilst the moon and stars, which govern the night, add their united evidence to magnify their Creator to a gazing but unaffected world; whilst the air whispers his clemency in the balmy refreshing gale, his majesty sounds aloud in roaring winds and rending storms: yet both expedients fail; man is like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears, he refuseth to hear the voice of the charmers, charm they never so sweetly, never so forcibly. Each flower, arrayed in beauty and breathing perfume, courts our affections for its infinitely amiable Author; not a bird that warbles, or a brook that murmurs, but invites our praise or chides our ingratitude. All the variety of fruits deposit their attestation on our palates, yet seldom reach our hearts: they give us a proof of the divine benignity, as undeniable as it is pleasing, and too often as ineffectual also. In short, the whole creation is a kind of magnificent embassy from its almighty Lord, deputed to proclaim his excellences, and demand our homage." Yet man, such is the depravity of his mind, disregards the former, and of consequence withholds the latter.

It may be said, these instances of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in the creation, are silent and inarticulate witnesses, and therefore fail to engage the attention of man. Alas! then his forgetfulness of his Maker is stubborn enough to withstand even louder calls. Behold! "the messenger of the Lord," with heaven-unkindled zeal in his heart and fire in his eyes, addresses him; he pleads before him the cause of God and truth; he makes his earnest appeal to reason, to man's own experience, whether God ought to be forgotten? He sets the Father of the spirits of all flesh before him, in the supreme glory of his character and the overflowing riches of his grace: yet the force of the impression abides no longer than till the next earthly trifle occurs, or the favorite object of pursuit presents itself to the mind. Either can scatter every idea of God from his faithless memory, as the wind disperses the chaff.

Nay, when *that holy word* which breathes the ma-

jesty of him who inspired it, is read by his minister, man, till renewed by grace, betrays in his whole deportment a flagrant insensibility and a reproachful irreverence toward God. The sons of business are still in idea, buying, selling, and getting gain, as at the exchange or market: the eye of lewdness ceases not, even in the holy assembly, to gratify evil concupiscence: youthful curiosity roves with careless indifference from object to object. Amidst a multitude of professed worshippers of God, only the few who have been happily recovered from their natural insensibility worship him in spirit and in truth. Weigh this fact, too, too frequently occurring, not to fall under your notice; and it will extort a confession from you, that the God, in whose hands is all our life and happiness, for time and for eternity, is more overlooked than the smallest object that concerns our temporal welfare, and more forgotten than the meanest person on whom we may have dependence.

We have seen, then, that it is the way of man to live in forgetfulness of God. But let not this forgetfulness be considered as the effect of mere inattention, a venial failing which, though it ought to be corrected, argues no corrupt nature—No, *it is highly culpable*: it arises entirely from a depravity of disposition. Are we wont to be obstinately inattentive to our friends, whilst any degree of veneration remains for them? When the lord of a great household is absent, and therefore invisible to his servants, do they lose the remembrance of their duty unless they are wholly base and prodigate? When children are separated from their affectionate parents, though even at the distance of whole kingdoms, can they lose a lively remembrance of their relation, or a sense of their obligations, unless they are sunk into total degeneracy? If we trace, therefore, man's forgetfulness of God up to its real source, it will afford us still more afflicting evidence of his natural depravity, and prove "he is a despoiser of the Lord God omnipotent."

Neither let ignorance of the nature of God, and of the homage he requires from men, be pleaded as an excuse for our forgetfulness. For has not reason remonstrated against our sin? Has not the word of God distinctly pointed out its malignity?—Have not undeniable facts proved, that God, notwithstanding his infinite greatness, is pleased to inspect our conduct with the most minute attention? No earthly potentate can show himself so observant of the manners of his subjects, so jealous of the honor of his laws, as the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. For, ask and inquire under heaven, from the beginning of the world unto this day, who is he among the princes of this world, that has so fully prohibited all that is evil, or so strictly enjoined the practice of all good, as the Lord of the whole earth? who has added penalties to deter from presumptuous offences against his laws, worthy to be compared to everlasting burnings? In what state are such rich preferments, such desirable honors, insured to loyalty and obedience, as in the kingdom of our God? or to say no more, who among the kings of the earth, in all the fierceness of his wrath, has been found so terrible to avenge his quarrel, as the righteous God, in his judgments that have been executed upon sinners?

Our forgetfulness, therefore, of so great a God, who has so plainly and fully manifested his authority, is sinful, and is an instance of high depravity. It is no less than contempt of God, and as such is a crime infinitely heinous. To show contempt to a person who is in any degree our superior, is a greater offence, all will allow, than if he were our equal. To offer an affront to a crowned head, a much greater offence than to a private man—as every act of honor derives its value from the dignity

of him who pays it, so an offence is dishonorable and base, in proportion to the character of him against whom it is committed. The consequence then is plain, that to show contempt to God, is an offence truly infinite; for almighty power, made lovely by an essential union with perfect wisdom, justice, and mercy, constitutes the name of God, and demands the heartfelt adoration of his creatures.—To question whether such an adoration be due to him, argues a profligate stupidity of mind; but to act as if he were unworthy of fear and love, is still more flagitious wickedness.

Yet that it is the custom of man thus to act, you may see in the clearest light, wherever you turn your eyes. Consider the multitudes who are living in the open breach of one or other of the laws of God. Are they doing so because they are ignorant that their sin is forbidden? No. Profane swearers know what the third Commandment requires, and by what Lawgiver it is enacted; the intemperate are acquainted with the Scripture which denounces woes on those "whose god is their belly, and who are mighty to drink wine;" the lewd are no strangers to that awful declaration, "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," nor fraudulent tradesmen to that solemn appeal, "Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

But notwithstanding these plain peremptory declarations, fraud, intemperance, and profaneness, have ever covered almost the whole face of the earth—and sinners of each of the above-mentioned class, though entreated, though importuned, though adjured in the name of God, who made, who preserves, and who will judge them, not only refuse to hearken, but rage in confidence of their own safety. By this conduct man foams out his own shame, and proves that, where he can neither plead ignorance, nor forgetfulness, he will dare to treat the commands of God as if he thought them the wild injunctions of passion, the impositions of tyranny, or the dictates of folly. He will dare to treat the law of his Maker, as if, in some instances, at least respecting himself, it were absurd in its intention, unreasonable in its restraints, unnecessary to be observed, and to be broken with impunity.

It is in vain for man to reply, whilst he remains a wilful transgressor of the law, that it is far from his intention to be guilty of contempt towards God, he only means to please himself in his sin. For where the law of God is openly declared, as it is in every Christian country, it is impossible to do the one without being guilty of the other also. A rebellious spirit cannot possibly discover a more flagrant contempt of God's government, than by first concluding, that it will be his interest to walk contrary to his commandment; and then, whilst doing so, making light of the wrath revealed in the most solemn manner against all the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.

But in whatever point of view man may himself regard his practice of sin, it is beyond dispute that the eternal God looks upon it in a most serious light, and will punish it as a contempt of his authority. He represents himself as so touched by the unprovoked and inexcusable rebellion of sinners, that he becomes inexorable to their cries, and regardless of the dreadful miseries into the abyss of which they are ready to fall: "Because I have called," by my Spirit, my law, and my ministers, "and ye refused;" because, like one vehemently desirous to be obeyed, "I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded." But "ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity, and I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction

cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you." Prov. i. 24—27. In this passage you observe the Almighty expressing, in the most alarming manner, the contempt and scorn he will show towards obstinate sinners, as only the just retaliation upon them of the very same usage and treatment he has received so long at their hands.

What has been offered proves but too fully the natural depravity of man. There is no way of refusing it, but by affirming that it implies no baseness to behave towards the Fountain of all good with forgetfulness, and to treat Excellency itself with contempt. But wherever there should be impiety enough to maintain such a shocking assertion, there would also be a living demonstration of the truth that was contradicted.

## SUNDAY VI.—CHAP. VI.

### NATURAL ENMITY OF MAN AGAINST GOD.

THE deplorable blindness of man in his natural condition, his neglect and contempt of God, have been already stated; but there is still, alas! something worse chargeable upon us all till created again in Christ Jesus. This I should carefully conceal, if it was my aim merely to please my reader, instead of bringing him thoroughly acquainted with himself. I know that what I am going to prove upon fallen man, is extremely offensive to natural pride. I remember well the time, when my own self-complacency would have been provoked at such a charge as I now bring against the human race.—Let me then entreat the candor of the reader to be lieve that I would most conscientiously avoid imputing to fallen man, more sinfulness than Scripture and experience fully warrant: let me also humbly request to be esteemed no less benevolent than if I maintained that man was born with perfect rectitude of soul. I should with the greatest pleasure embrace that opinion, if fact and the express testimony of God did not compel me to renounce it as a dangerous delusion.

Having thus endeavored to procure an unprejudiced hearing of my arguments, I am bold to open to the bottom the deplorable corruption of human nature, and to maintain that there dwells in the heart of every man, till changed by grace, *an aversion to the very Author of his being*. This is an accusation of so detestable a kind, that even those who are most visibly under the power of a dreadful depravity of mind, will not allow its truth. But the proofs I shall bring are such as every one would allow sufficiently to demonstrate aversion in any other case. And after these proofs are laid before you, you shall then hear the infallible decisions of the word of God.

You will allow, then, that wherever the company of persons confessedly wise, excellent, and amiable, is distasteful and irksome, there is ground to conclude, that it arises from some personal dislike.—Now secret prayer, and reading the Scriptures with humility and attention, are the nearest approach to God, the most like being in his company of any thing of which we are at present capable. By these, therefore, we are said in Scripture, "to seek his face and come into his presence." If therefore an aversion to holding such intercourse as this with God, can be proved natural to fallen man, it evidently proves his aversion to him; for none can dispute the wisdom of God or his glorious excellence.

By this test try the human race in every stage of life, and say, where are the young people, where are the old, who before they are divinely renewed, have any delight in prayer and reading the Scripture?—I do not say they totally neglect them; but do not



they repeat their prayers in haste, without serious attention to their meaning? Is not the Bible, that authentic account of God and his wonderful works, a dull tasteless book, and therefore neglected? If it is read, are not a few minutes thought time enough for such a task, whilst hours are every day consumed with delight in idle sauntering, in frivolous visits, or in frothy entertainments? If this conduct doth not, what can demonstrate the aversion of man to God? especially, since God, amazing condescension! offers to hold communion with us, invites our acquaintance, and would have us regard him as our exceeding joy; why is this offer slighted? Surely, because we naturally like not to retain him in our knowledge, nor to glorify him as God.

Again: it cannot be doubted that a great degree of hatred against a person prevails when it extends even to those that are connected with him, and when attachment to him becomes a cause for breaking the closest bonds of friendship.

Tried by this rule, the natural aversion of man's heart to his glorious Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, appears as flagrant in its effects, as it is detestable in itself. A zealous spirit of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ may be considered as the expression of a sincere attachment to him; but this spirit is, in all ages of life, offensive to the generality of mankind. Does this uncommon, but most excellent disposition discover itself in a child at school, his playmates, as from an instinctive enmity against him, will assault and persecute him with derision. In universities, which furnish education for the world, you may be lewd and intemperate, profane in speech and principle, without offence to your fellow-students; but if, with a becoming fortitude, you refrain from all fashionable sins, and urge the authority of God's law against them, the most cutting ridicule and abusive insult will be heaped upon you.

Now as this is the case before the corrupt affections of the human heart are strengthened by age or inflamed by indulgence, it must necessarily be much more so afterward. It is accordingly a fact, that the real fear and love of God in Christ Jesus, become the cause of variance and separation where the greatest intimacy and the closest friendship subsisted before. Those very persons who, whilst living in a fashionable forgetfulness of God, were beloved as most amiable, and even proposed as patterns for imitation—no sooner are divinely changed to delight in the knowledge of God, and his gospel, than they perceive their careless friends treat them at first with a civil reserve, then proceed to censures of their extravagant piety, and at length discard them entirely from their friendship. But could this be the case if there were no aversion in the heart to God? By no means; for though you may not like your friend's contracting an intimacy with a third person, yet you will not quarrel with him for it, unless you had a secret dislike of that person in your heart.

It is a sure proof of aversion against a person, when "the respectful mention of his name, and the just praise ascribed to him, is not borne without impatience and displeasure." The party-bigot, every man will allow, overflows with the gall of bitterness; and therefore, when the good qualities of those who are in opposition to his sect become the subject of discourse, he either sits in silent chagrin, or is evidently impatient till another topic of discourse is introduced.

And is it not then a proof of aversion to God, when, amidst all the variety of subjects of discourse, objection is made only against such as are designed to magnify the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? What but aversion to God

would immediately brand such conversations with the odious names of cant and hypocrisy, and obstinately ascribe it to some hateful motive of ostentation or sinister design?

Men are pleased with incessant prating about every the meanest trifle, or most sordid vanity; but as soon as any attempt is made to turn the conversation on the great Lord of the world, his transactions, government, perfections, and love, the very mention of the subject is received in most companies with visible dislike, a disapproving silence ensues, and the subject drops as soon as introduced.—Ah! what can demonstrate that the unrenewed heart of man is at enmity with God, if this fact does not, which proclaims so loudly that he is the only person of whom no one chooses to speak, and whose praises no one desires to hear? Could a circle of avowed Atheists desire to have it otherwise?

Again: who can doubt whether enmity reigns in the heart against an earthly king, when the tongue is busy in abusing his professed friends, and in casting reproach upon his government, and the hand is active in opposing it? Can it be doubted then what is the real temper of man's heart towards God the King of the whole earth, before a divine change is experienced, when it is common to hear ridicule poured upon the pious and devout, as creatures absurdly demure, pitifully weak in their judgment, or enthusiastic in their temper? What a malicious insinuation is this against the glory of God? Does it not imply that all who have any concern for this honor are actually under the power of delusion, and truly despicable in their choice and pursuits?

Add to this, that the disobedience of men to the law of God amounts to the strongest proofs of aversion to him. Every wilful transgression is an act of controversy with him who forbids it, and of direct opposition to his will; it is expressly styled in Scripture, "rebellion against God." For though we have no power to overcome our Maker, or to shake the everlasting pillars of his throne; though we cannot bring forth the weapons of our indignation against the invisible God, as rebellious subjects can do against their mortal sovereign, yet the bidding defiance to his law demonstrates our will to do this execrable deed. It is an evident declaration that our spirit is in a state of hostility against heaven. Every open presumptuous offender against God, calls aloud by his practice upon all who behold it, Come on, rise up with me, against the Lord; who is he that he should reign over us?

Now from these instances, notorious in every place, make an estimate of the natural disposition of man's heart towards God, and then say if it is not evidently that of aversion; and if you would allow these instances a sufficient demonstration of enmity in every other case, be ingenuous and honest enough to grant it to be such in the present.

To prevail with you to do this, attend further to the manner in which our natural state and condition is represented by the God of truth. He constantly speaks of the children of men, in their unregenerate state, as *haters* of him, as his *adversaries* and *enemies*. Christ, we are assured, "died for the ungodly;" that is, those who were "enemies to God."

The same truth is positively affirmed, Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind" (which the context explains to be the mind of man in its natural state) is not only disinclined to God, but *enmity* against him; which enmity expresses itself in refusing to be subject to the law of God.

Indeed the gospel itself, even in one of its most lovely titles, emphatically implies the melancholy truth we are proving. For it is called the ministry of *reconciliation*, that is, a method designed by consummate wisdom, and executed by almighty love

to reconcile us unto God, who were "enemies in our minds" to him "by wicked works." Col. i. 21. And let the man who would deny the necessity of reconciliation in his own case, descend into his breast and take a full survey of his duty by the light of Scripture, and then say what hope he can have, but from an act of grace in God, receiving him to favor, and putting him in a way of complete redemption by a new birth of the Spirit in the renovation of his heart.

From this proof of the total depravity of man in his temper towards God, his natural guilt and sinfulness appear in a glaring light. For what can be more criminal than such disaffection to God the Father everlasting? It is no less than a total denial of the relation that subsists between the Creator and the creature. It is removing the best and noblest part of the divine workmanship, visible on earth, from its proper basis and centre. If you were to break in pieces the frame of nature, and resolve the world into a mere chaos, the confusion and evil would not be so great, as that of breaking the bonds which unite the Creator to his noblest work, a rational immortal soul. All the relations of creatures towards each other are mean and insignificant, in comparison of those which subsist between creatures and the Author of their being. Besides, what monstrous wickedness is it to be disaffected to our most bountiful Benefactor? What do we think and say of those who have an aversion to their parents? What, when they dislike and shun those who have been ever kind and full of paternal love; are we not wont to brand such ungrateful children with every name of reproach, and to judge them guilty in the highest degree? But in how small a measure do parents contribute to the being and welfare of their children, in comparison of what the great God doth to ours? and how little superiority in point of power and excellency have parents over their children? Whereas the excellency of our Maker surpasses even our highest conceptions.

And what cause can man pretend for his disaffection towards God; many good works has he done for us; for which of these is he hated? What injuries have we received from him to offend us; rather may I say, by how many powerful allurements hath he sought to gain our affections; by benefits visible to every eye, repeated day by day in all the comforts and conveniences of life; by inviting us to the highest degrees of honor and happiness, by giving his only Son to be a sacrifice for our sins.

Disaffection to our Maker comprehends all other wickedness; for as the law of love is the sum and substance of all the precepts, so disaffection to God is comprehensive of all iniquity, since every branch of it may be resolved into this depravity of mind.

If you ask what is the use of so strongly representing the natural vileness of man, and giving his portrait in colors so opposite to those in which he is drawn by the flattering pencil of many moral painters? The answer is, that it is only upon the doctrine of the entire corruption of human nature that the propriety of the capital and peculiar doctrines of the Bible rests. By the capital and peculiar doctrines of Scripture, I understand redemption from the insupportable punishment of sin, acceptance with God only through faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the illumination of the mind, and a change of disposition by the inward operation of the eternal Spirit.

Against these doctrines you must be strongly prejudiced, or will receive them only as speculative points, till you are sensible that your natural state is exceedingly corrupt. For though your conscience will not suffer you to say you have done no evil, yet, if possessing some civil and moral virtues which

gain you esteem amongst men, you believe yourself to be comparatively innocent, you cannot be reconciled to those declarations of Scripture which affirm "eternal death to be the just portion of fallen man."

Equally averse must you be to embrace the gospel method of purification unto eternal life. The flattering idea of your own merit, and the plausible expectation of greater reformation, will render you too partial to your own righteousness to permit you to approve of the doctrine of salvation by grace; for this is a doctrine infinitely mortifying to human pride; it disannuls every plea for mercy but the sufferings and victory of the high and holy Redeemer, who, in absolute pity, undertook to recover fallen man from ruin, by bearing his sin and subduing his enemies. A way of reconciliation this, which is never cordially accepted, nor effectually used, till all the tempers and dispositions natural to the human mind are confessed to be evil, that is, full of disaffection and enmity against the law of God. Whereas the full conviction of this truth disposes the mind to perceive that it became him, by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, in this, and no other way of justifying sinners, to bring many sons to glory.

Moreover; whilst it is supposed that men are not by nature deplorably blind to the truths of God, and to his excellency, and in their earliest dispositions set against him; the doctrine of regeneration, and of divine grace, as the principle of a new life, must appear unnecessary and absurd. For if man's understanding is not darkened, if by thought and reflection he can attain a due knowledge of the truth, he does not then stand in need of foreign help. In this case it is reasonable to urge him to exert his own powers; but to press him to make request for a spirit of wisdom and revelation, is vain and foolish. In the same manner, divine grace can never be conceived necessary to form and fashion the soul anew, unless it is naturally prone to express forgetfulness, contempt, and hatred towards its glorious Creator. To reform the outward actions, or to lead a life merely sober and honest, requires no such supernatural aid and powerful operation. We daily see many who despise prayer and the word of God, and are altogether sensual and earthly, yet living in integrity and in quietness with their neighbors; so that it is not with respect to social dispositions that men universally discover their depravity, and their want of a new heart and a new spirit. But it is that secret impiety which opposes our giving to God the honor, obedience, and supreme love which are due unto his holy name, which renders the agency of the Holy Ghost absolutely necessary. It is the removal and cure of a dreadful disorder which runs in the blood of all the human race, which is interwoven with our corrupted frame, and demands the skill and energy of Him whose power first formed the soul, to restore it again to the image of God.

The conclusion therefore is plain, that as ignorance of our natural condition and character with respect to God prevails, the whole scheme of Christian principles must be rejected, or hypocritically received, whilst in the same degree that we know ourselves, it will be revered, embraced, and practically improved by us.

## SUNDAY VII.—CHAP. VII.

### ON THE PERFECTION AND USE OF THE LAW.

We have now endeavored to delineate the character of God and the natural state of man, as they are revealed in Scripture; the next subject with which all men ought to be fully acquainted, is the nature of the law. The law, with its terms of perfect righteousness



ness and life on the one hand, of disobedience and death on the other, is the first thing which the word of God presents to our notice; and till this is known, the gospel cannot be understood, nor the grace of God be duly received! for the gospel is the revelation of God's way of delivering a sinner from the curse of the law. The intimate connection which subsists between the law and the gospel is frequently taught in Scripture; yet from a natural reluctance to confess ourselves the guilty impotent creatures we are, and from a false construction of what is spoken of the law (as if it related only or chiefly to the Jewish state,) this connection is fatally overlooked by multitudes who profess themselves Christians.

To remove such hurtful ignorance I shall lay before you the perfection and extent of the moral law; the excellent ends it perpetually answers wherever it is duly received, and the pernicious errors which must possess and govern the minds of men whilst they remain ignorant of it.

The perfection of the law of God will evidently appear by comparing it with other laws, and observing its greater extent. With regard to human laws, even the best of them must ever prove defective in this, that they cannot reach the propensities to evil, nor take cognizance of the intents of the heart; their whole force can extend no further than to forbid acts which would disturb the public peace. The law of God, on the contrary, condemns, under pain of insupportable penalties, the latent compliances of the heart with temptation, and commands us to resist the first workings of evil within.

If it is said the law of conscience is not defective in this respect, as the laws of the state must be; that this goes deeper, serving as a supplement to them, and restraining where the power of a penal statute cannot. It may be replied, that the law of conscience is principally formed by the manners and sentiments of those with whom we are educated, and with whom we converse. Of course it is depraved by customs and prejudices of various kinds; it must prove therefore an uncertain, and sometimes perhaps a dangerous, instead of a sufficient rule of action. But the law of Scripture leaves us in no such difficulties; whilst we are directed by it, we are following no other guide than that of perfect truth and righteousness.

The law which is established for the peace and good government of nations, is often severe and distressing to individuals, nor can it be otherwise; the best therefore is that which is accompanied with the fewest evils. But the law of God is equally, at all times, and in all places, of universal benefit; wherever it is most conscientiously regarded, there the greatest measure of happiness will certainly be enjoyed. For no one with truth can say, he is in the least degree aggrieved by it; nor can any, either of the rich or the poor, whilst they regard their true comfort or interest, have cause to wish the least alteration in it.

Again, the doctrine or law which the moral philosophers of old taught, and which many profess still greatly to admire, is little more than an imposture, covered over with swelling words of vanity.—It undertakes to annihilate the passions, yet neither promises nor intimates that any supernatural aid shall be afforded to accomplish such an arduous work. Nay, it encourages instead of condemning some of the worst tempers natural to man. It cures intemperance and the thirst for revenge by pride, the sins of the body by giving indulgence to those of the mind, that is, in other words, it makes a man less like a beast, by making him more like a devil.

Far different is the law of Scripture; this allows no place for sinful tempers of any kind; it strikes at the root of every disposition contrary to the perfection of the soul.

There is however one law which calls for a more respectful consideration: for it claims the God of heaven and earth for its author; I mean the *Jewish ceremonial law*. But even this, when compared with the moral, will appear far less excellent. For though of divine appointment, it was appropriated only to one people and nation; whereas the moral law extends to all, for it immediately results from the relation of mankind to God, as their Creator and Benefactor.

In the ceremonial law there was only a relative use and worth; it was to serve for a figure for the time then present; it was designed with no other view than to shadow forth Christ the substance, and then to cease for ever when he appeared. But the moral law possesses an excellence which endures for ever: and whilst the ordinances of the one, in a figurative symbolical manner, only respected inward purity, the precepts of the other are directly ordained to require righteousness in the tempers and imaginations of the heart.

The excellence and perfection of the moral law will appear still more manifest from a brief survey of what may be considered as an epitome of it, the law of the ten Commandments. From their extent and spirituality, it will appear indisputable, that its precepts are designed to secure God all the honor due unto his name, to sanctify all the powers of man, to regulate his deportment in every condition in which he can possibly be placed, and to point out the most exalted degree of holiness. For though we are apt injuriously to limit their sense, and to conclude with an air of confidence that they mean to forbid only the gross outward crimes which the first sound of the words suggest: yet, from the more extensive interpretation (See Matt. xxv. 27. 1 John iii. 15. Matt. xxii. 36.) given to some of them in Scripture, we may justly conclude that each of them is spiritual in its injunctions, and reaches to the inmost affections of the soul.

Thus, the *First* Commandment requires that the blessed God should reign unrivalled in our hearts: that bodily pleasure, honor, riches, and every comfort of a worldly kind, should, in comparison of God, be vile and contemptible in our eyes. The *Second* obliges us to be religiously careful that we conceive of God as he has revealed himself to us, neither adding to, nor diminishing from, his character, as drawn in his word; that in our public and secret worship we come before him only in the way which he has appointed: offering to him spiritual praise, thanksgiving, and prayer, and abhorring the very appearance of idolatry. The *Third* Commandment requires us to be mindful at all times of the majesty of God, so as conscientiously to avoid in our thoughts and speech whatever savors of contempt, irreverence, or forgetfulness of him. The *Fourth* enjoins us, upon constant solemn seasons, returning in quick succession, to lay aside every worldly occupation, to be as it were insensible to the things of sense and time; in order that the worth of the soul, and subjects of a spiritual nature may occupy our thoughts, and more strongly affect our minds. The *Fifth* obliges us, as soon as we are capable of knowing our duty, to pay a sincere and cheerful obedience to our parents; such as may testify the sense we have of the benefits, that, under God, we owe to them. It enjoins also a respectful and proper behavior to superiors of every kind, to the king, to magistrates, to ministers, and masters. The *Sixth* not only restrains our hands from murderous violence, but condemns every degree of hatred or malice in the heart. The *Seventh* Commandment requires more than a renunciation of open lewdness, even purity of desire; it arraigns and condemns as a trespass every impure look: it condemns even such spiritual defilement as only the

eye of God can detect. The *Eighth* is a barrier against every injurious encroachment which our self-love and worldly spirit would lead us to make upon our neighbor's rights: it forbids every species of injustice or fraud, however prevalent, however palliated by plausible pretences. The *Ninth* exacts from us an inviolable regard to truth, in every declaration by which the character of our fellow-creatures may be affected; and enjoins us to subdue that world of iniquity, the tongue, which is so impatient of yielding to the law of brotherly kindness and charity. The *last* commandment condemns every covetous desire, and every degree of discontent at our appointed situation.

From this brief account of the sense of the Ten Commandments, it is evident, that there is not a moral precept enjoined in any part of the Bible which was not virtually contained in the law of the Two Tables delivered on mount Sinai. Our Lord justifies this conclusion, by explaining in this manner the comprehensive import of the commandments. Those of the first table he considers as requiring us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength. Mark xii. 30. "With all our heart, and with all our soul," that is, with a love so fervent and affectionate as to desire nothing in comparison of his favor, and the promotion of his glory; to regard him as the joy of our prosperity, the light of our life, and our portion for ever. "With all our strength," that is, so to promote the fear and love of his name by all our services and labors. "With all our mind," that is, by all the means by which our reason and understanding can furnish or discover.—Thus are all our powers and faculties to be engaged in discharging our duty towards God, according to the demands of this spiritual law.

The laws of the second table also our Lord interprets to imply an obligation to love our neighbor "as we love ourselves," that is, to pity his mistakes, to compassionate his infirmities, to conceal his faults, to exercise every office of kindness towards him, in the same manner as we should rejoice to have it exercised towards ourselves.

From this view of the extent of the law, it appears to be altogether worthy of its holy author the God of heaven and earth; who is at once jealous of the honor of his name amongst men, and full of tender regard to their welfare.

The excellent ends which this law answers, wherever it is received and duly regarded, is the next point to be considered.

Now one most obvious use is, that of a complete standard of good and evil. Whilst man possessed the original excellence he received from the hands of his Creator, a law written and engraved on tables of stone was needless. Before his fall, the graces of his soul were a living representation of the spirit of the law; and as face answereth to face in the glass, so did the unsullied mind of Adam to the will of God, of which the law is the perfect transcript. But man "shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," is darkened in his understanding, and nothing of that law of righteousness remains with him, which Adam in innocence possessed. Instead of innate knowledge of the truth, man must now, if left to himself, labor by slow and multiplied deductions to know his duty. So defective is his own unassisted reason in determining what is right and wrong, that things utterly detestable in our judgement, who have the pure light of the law, have been practised and approved in polite and civilized nations. A palpable proof this, that man has no light in himself, sufficient to exhibit a clear rule of right.

To supply his want in this most important matter is one obvious design of the law, which God enacted

from mount Sinai. This delivers man from his own fallacious reasonings about duty: this gives him to understand what are the peremptory commands of God, without leaving him in the perplexing labyrinth of his own imaginations. This demands his attention to a short but most comprehensive rule of action; a rule which claims the God of heaven and earth for its adorable author, and of course equally excludes all doubt and all debate.

Another standing and perpetual use of the law is, by its penalty to deter from rebellion against God those whom more generous motives will not restrain. The law represents the thunderbolt of divine indignation as ready to fall every moment upon the offender against God; it brings upon him a dread of God as the judge "who will not hold him guiltless," but on the contrary, "will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children of them that hate him, to the third and fourth generation," whilst he keeps "mercy for thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments." The inclinations of the heart, it is true, when only confined by external restraint, remain evil as before; yet the mischief that would follow, if they were indulged, is thus prevented. As men who do not abhor what is criminal, yet, through fear of punishment, dare not disturb the peace of society by acts of violence, so there are thousands kept from excess in wickedness by a dread of the threatening annexed to the transgression of the law of God.

To serve as a standard of right and wrong, and to deter from offences, are uses which the law of God has in common with human laws. But besides these, there are others which are peculiar to it: the Bible assures us the law was given "that every mouth might be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." Rom. iii. 19. It was given also, says the apostle, to serve as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, "who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth." Gal. iii. 24. Rom. x.

Now that it is a principal design of the law to confound all who trust in themselves as righteous, and to bring on a conviction of guilt, is plain from the titles given to it in Scripture, and the reasonings of the apostle concerning it. The law of the Ten Commandments is distinguished by the apostle from the ceremonial one, by styling it the law *written and engraven in tables of stone*. After this distinction is made, which clearly identifies the law of which the apostle was treating, he gives it the title of *the ministration of CONDEMNATION*. 2 Cor. iii. 9.—This title implies a law which, though it may perfectly lay before man the extent of his duty, yet it inexorably condemns him. It allows no plea which he can offer to obtain an acquittal. The necessary result of its operation, when the natural state of man is considered, must be that of universal condemnation rather than acquittal, unless a Mediator is found to interpose and save.

But lest a single declaration of this most awful truth should be evaded or forgotten; or lest we should think slightly of that condemnation to which the law subjects every transgressor, it is therefore again called by that distressing name *the ministration of DEATH*. This teaches us, that having arraigned and convicted man, it pronounced him condemned; exposed without any power in himself to overcome or evade his sentence to death. And lest it should be doubted whether by *death* is meant spiritual destruction, or merely the dissolution of the body, it is further styled, "the strength of sin." 1 Cor. xv. 56. This intimates that the formidable power which binds over every unpardoned offender, to answer for his sins, and transmits him after judgment, to suffer the pains of hell, is the *Law*. In confirmation of this its grand design to prove our ruin—



ed condition without a Saviour, believers are exhortation to abound in thankfulness to God for giving them a "victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" over this Law, which, through the corruption of human nature, is become their dreadful accuser.—Christ is therefore celebrated as an inestimable benefactor to his church, not merely because he gave us an example that we should follow his steps, not merely because he came to save those who trust in him from the temptations of a seducing world, or from the power of Satan; but because he hath "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13.

Still farther, God has been pleased to use a wonderful method of explaining important doctrines of his word, by exhibiting them in the history and experience of his servants. In this way of example he has taught us that the law of the Ten Commandments was given to convince man of his guilt and sinfulness. St. Paul is chosen, and by inspiration directed to relate his Pharisaical ignorance of the grand design of the law, and then to describe the change produced in his mind by a just and clear knowledge of it. "I was alive," says he, "without the law once;" secure and self-satisfied, I regarded the moral law as the rule by which man was to be justified before God; and I thought that I had paid such an obedience to it as, considering human infirmity, must render me acceptable to God. "But when the commandment came," that is, when the design of it was duly understood by me, "sin revived," it became strong and irresistible in its accusations against me "and I died;" my self-confidence vanished, and I saw and confessed myself to be a ruined sinner before the holy law of God. "And the commandment which was ordained to life," which was originally designed to be to the first man a covenant of life, "I found to be unto death;" so far from justifying or acquitting me, it condemned and bound me over to the misery of hell. Should it be said that the apostle, in his passage, speaks not in his own but in an assumed character, we may observe that he expresses himself to the very same purpose in his Epistle to the Galatians: when ardently speaking in his own proper person, "I," says he, "through the law, am dead to the law:" through the just knowledge I now have of the extent of its precepts, and of God's grand design by it, not to justify but to condemn every living soul, I have entirely renounced all dependence upon the law, as able to acquit me from guilt on account of any obedience I can pay to it: "I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," by faith in his Son.

And lest all this proof should not be sufficient to convince men, whose pride and self-conceit would dispose them to reject this humbling doctrine, and lead them to confine these declarations to the Jewish and ceremonial law; the apostle takes particular care to assert such things of the law of which he was treating, as in no sense are, nor ever were, true of the ceremonial. Thus the law of which St. Paul speaks, is one, "by which every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." But the ceremonial law never was, nor can be urged to condemn us Gentiles, or to show our guilt in any degree. The law of which the apostle speaks is a law established by faith, but faith absolutely abolished the Jewish law. It is a law to which the believing Romans were married; but many of them never submitted to the ceremonial one. It is a law according to which "the man that doeth these things shall live by them." A law which "if the uncircumcision keep, his uncircumcision shall be counted for circumcision." It is a law which is spiritual, whereas the ceremonial consisted of carnal ordinances. These properties which cannot be applied to the ceremonial law, evidently

prove the law in the apostle's view to have been the moral one, of which the Ten Commandments are a summary.

Now, after such various testimonies, what more can reasonably be demanded to prove, that one principal end for which the law is ordained, is to convince every man living of his guilt and sinfulness in the sight of God.\*

## SUNDAY VIII.—CHAP. VIII.

### OF THE LAW AS PREPARING FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL.

We have already considered the perfection and extent of the law: we have taken a view of it as a rule which determines our duty in all cases. We have also produced several sacred testimonies, to prove, that it was designed to humble the pride of man, and to serve to him as a ministration of condemnation. But, connected with this, the law answers another important purpose—"It was given," saith the apostle, "to serve as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." This use of the law is what I now propose to explain; but it will be useful previously to remove the objections which pride and prejudice are ready to bring against the law on account of what they term inexorable rigor.

You think it hard then that we should be under a law whose demands are so strict and rigid: but what less than perfect love and sinless obedience can be due from a reasonable intelligent creature to his adorable Maker? To suppose a law given of God, which would admit of imperfect love and obedience, would leave it impossible to determine what is sin, and what is not; "for sin is the transgression of the law." But if the law itself would be satisfied with sincerity of intention only, or merely with the best kind of obedience which a corrupted creature could pay to it, how could any transgression of it be defined? Upon this supposition, it would be essential to the law to admit of imperfection and sin. Besides, were we to suppose that God could overlook *one* transgression of his law, we should naturally, and I think might justly conclude, that he would overlook more; and where then shall we stop? Who shall say how far we may, or may not go with impunity? And what must this prove in the end, but giving man liberty to fix the bounds according to his own will? What but putting man in possession of a right to dispense with the law of God at pleasure, and thus in effect to abrogate it? It is therefore a design every way worthy infinite wisdom, to publish a law which is a perfect representation of God's glorious holiness; and to annex to every the least transgression of it condemnation and the curse.

If you say, that such representation of the law shuts up all men, without exception, in hopeless condemnation, I answer, It does indeed show them that they have destroyed themselves, and it proves that they can find salvation only in the way the gospel reveals; for there is no other way by which men can be saved. God must alike require obe-

\* When you consider the law of the Ten Commandments in this light, what a striking propriety appears in that ancient custom of placing the Two Tables over the communion-table in our churches! By this means every intelligent receiver of the Lord's Supper, in the very act of receiving, is awfully reminded of the purity of that law which he has transgressed, of that law from whose insupportable curse no less a sacrifice than that of God's only begotten Son could possibly redeem him.

dience at all times; and it is one great design of all Scripture, and especially a renewal of the law of Moses, to ground us in this truth, that every act of disobedience is a forfeiture of all claim to the favor of God, and subjects us to punishment. Where then else will you in this extremity look for safety? Will you say to God, "have patience with me, and I will pay thee all?" Will you venture your soul upon the perfection of your own works? This you dare not. This you see is at once to give yourself up to destruction. Perhaps you will flee to your sincerity, taking it for granted that God, notwithstanding the confessed imperfections of your obedience will accept it for its sincerity. But what Scripture warrant have you to say, that though God required a perfect obedience to his law at one time, and in one age of the world, he has now discharged men from that obligation, and will accept at their hands what they are able to offer him, be it ever so unworthy his acceptance, or short of the demands of his law? It is presumption to think thus, without especial ground from the word of God; and there you will certainly find none for this novel and mischievous opinion. Besides, what would you gain by this opinion, unless you could answer for your sincerity to that God, "whose eyes are as a flaming fire searching the heart?" For if you make sincerity the ground of your acceptance with God, you must stand or fall by it, and are obliged to make it good, without any failure or blemish, on pain of eternal condemnation. So that still you are upon no foundation for life, for solid peace and comfort.

It was therefore merciful in God to constitute his law a ministration of condemnation; it acts like an engine of irresistible force, to sweep away from us every refuge of lies, in which man would vainly seek a deceitful security; it compels us to renounce those false pleas for obtaining mercy, which, so soon as the light of truth shines into our hearts, we shall be ashamed we could even so much as think of using.

Having thus endeavored to remove the objections which might be urged against the law, as harsh and severe, I proceed to explain its principal design; a design replete with benevolence, and productive of the greatest good to man. "For the law is intended to act as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." No sooner can we perceive ourselves actually cut off from every hope of mercy, which we were wont to entertain on account of our own performances and worth, than we shall find ourselves prepared, and as it were compelled, to put our whole trust in the grace of God manifested in Christ in that scheme of marvellous love to man, which is called "the righteousness of God without the law, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe." Rom. iii. 22. A true knowledge of the nature and end of the law sounds an alarm to the conscience, which was before asleep, dreaming of peace, when there was no peace. Thus alarmed, the ear is opened to listen to the word of reconciliation declared by Christ, and the heart is disposed earnestly to apply to the Redeemer, as to one who alone is able to save from such insupportable misery as the curse of the law.

It is the law also which, continually showing us by the exhibition of its own purity, our deficiency and corruption, and approving itself to our consciences as just and good, stimulates us to earnest endeavors to resist and subdue the body of sin.—Hence that intestine war of which the apostle speaks so feelingly, Rom. vii. 18. "I know," says he, "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform (as the law requires) that which is good, I find not; for I delight in the law of God after the

inner man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind." In other words, I perceive two contrary principles within me, the one derived from God, the other 'the produce of my corrupt nature; that leading me forward to heaven, and approving the spiritual demands of the law: *this* opposing my progress, and struggling against me. My mind is a field of battle, where all my passions exert their several efforts to gain a conquest over me. In this case, what must be done? St. Paul instructs us by his own example; after asking the question with much emphasis, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he relieves himself from every despondent thought, by saying, "I thank God," that is, for his grace, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." This, this alone it is, which can and will deliver me.

Into this pungent sensibility of our own sinfulness it is the intention of God by his law to bring us, that so we may be able, which otherwise we never should, to behold the necessity and glory of the redemption there is in Jesus. He has mercifully ordained the law, and annexed the curse to the least breach of it, that he might shut up every door of hope, except that by which the fullest pardon and the richest mercy are dispensed to sinners. The thunders and lightnings on mount Sinai are designed to make us account ourselves unspeakably happy in being allowed access to mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the living God, where the divine goodness shines forth in the perfection of beauty.

That this is no human scheme of doctrine, but the truth of God's holy word, is manifest. "The Scripture," says the apostle, "has concluded all under sin, that the promise which is by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe." Gal. iii. 22. The apostle is here proving that the law, in the possession of which the Jews greatly boasted, was so far from lessening the necessity of salvation by Christ, or from interfering with this adorable scheme of grace, that, when rightly understood, it acted strongly in suberviency to it.

For such is our natural pride and self-sufficiency, so slight our thoughts of the evil of sin, so extravagant our conceit of the extent of God's mercy, that if we did not perceive ourselves condemned by the mouth of the Lord, and doomed as criminals to suffer the execution of eternal justice, there is not one of us who would come to the Son of God for life. God has therefore by his law actually shut us up as rebels against his government, under a total inability of making reparation for our treason. This he has done, that our haughty spirit being humbled through a sense of our miserable condition, we might embrace with all possible thankfulness the grace offered to us in Christ.

Thus "the law," or rule of perfect obedience, "came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ, for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," that is, through the corruption of human nature, "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." A passage this, so pertinent to the subject, and so full of instruction, requires an explanation. Consider therefore the aim, and trace the progress of the apostle's reasoning. He is clearing up and confirming that great privilege of the gospel, that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and who," in consequence of their faith in him, "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." To this St. Paul knew some would be ready to object and say, How can this be, since every believer falls short of perfect



obedience, he offends against the law, and therefore must be liable to its curse? The answer is, believers are delivered from condemnation, because of the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." That new dispensation, introduced in the room of the old law, promises pardon, and the gift of the Spirit, in which things the true life and real happiness of mankind subsist. By this new and gracious dispensation, "God hath made me," saith the apostle, "free from the law of sin and death;" from that law which convinced me of sin, condemned me for it, and bound me over to suffer death. These are glad tidings doubtless; but are they not attended with two inconveniences? Does not this procedure deprive the law of its due honors, and does it not screen the offender from his deserved punishment? By no means; for that which was an absolute impossibility to men, on account of the strictness of the law and the weakness of human nature, God, to whom nothing is impossible, has most wonderfully accomplished, by "sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh," to live among sinners, to perform the perfect obedience due from them, and also to be a sacrifice for sin; he having charged it upon him, and suffering its punishment. By this grand expedient God has provided for the honor and perfect accomplishment of the law. He has also condemned and punished sin with the utmost severity, and both in the flesh, in that very nature which was guilty, disabled, and ruined. Should it be further asked, wherefore is all this? It is to lay the surest foundation, and to make the most complete provision for our justification. It is, "that the righteousness of the law," both its righteous sentence and its righteous precept, whatever either of suffering or obedience it required, being fulfilled in Christ, "might be fulfilled in us." It was all done in our name; and as he and we are one, one in civil estimation, for he is our representative; and one in legal estimation, for he is our surety, his righteous acts in their beneficial efficacy are ours, and his atoning death is ours: "ours, who walk not after the flesh," who have our conversation towards God and man, not according to the principles of corrupt nature, though to our grief they still have place within us, "but after the Spirit," according to higher and divine principles, which are implanted in our hearts, and continually supported by the Spirit of God. Rom. viii. 2-4.

You have now placed before you in one view the Scriptural account of the nature and design of the law. And unless pride, and the doctrines of men, calculated to sooth that worst disease of our minds, mislead us, we shall be persuaded that this representation of strictness equally secures the honor of God and our own comfort in serving him. It is the purity of the law which enhances and endears above all expression, the perfect obedience of Christ, both active and passive, and the imputation of his merits, that special crowning mercy of the new covenant. Against this view of the nature of the law there is however a common and plausible objection made, which it may be necessary, before I proceed further, to obviate. It is urged then, that by showing the impossibility of answering the demands of the law, you in fact weaken our obligations to the law; and by extolling the obedience of Christ as the only ground of hope to man, you diminish the value of our obedience. Hence a door is opened for licentiousness. Without doubt the doctrines of divine grace may be thus abused, and it is to be feared that many weak and corrupt men have so abused them; but it may be replied, what doctrine may not be perverted? Is not the display of the patience and mercy of God equally liable to licentious abuse as this doctrine? But will you, on account of the general abuse of these perfections

of God, be jealous of them as prejudicial to the cause of practical religion? or will you deny their existence because the avowal of them may have a bad tendency? The thought is dreadful, and the consequence would be universal destruction. It is the same with the doctrine of the law, when you infer from the impossibility of your being justified by your obedience to it, the necessity of being saved by faith in the Redeemer. Act then with respect to both in the same manner; maintain the doctrines, detest and expose the abuse of them.

But if you were to give up this Scriptural idea of the law, still it remains to be considered whether you would gain any thing in favor of the interests of practical religion? No—you would only grant men the liberty of explaining the law according to their own inclinations, in a manner subversive of the fear and love of God, and of regard to his authority. It must be remembered, also, that when the apostles assert the impossibility of justification by the law, they do not therefore make void the law; when they extol the grace and mercy of Christ, they by no means allow of continuance in sin. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" do "we then make void the law by faith? yea, we establish the law." This is their constant reply to all who arraign the doctrine of grace as licentious. Indeed it is the chosen, and by experience it is found to be the only successful mean of turning the heart to God in love. Its genuine operation is to bind us to him in everlasting bonds of gratitude and willing obedience. Know your guilt and weakness, your desert and danger; think what you are bound to by the law, and what you have to trust to if left under its power; view then the loving kindness of God in giving his Son to fulfil all righteousness, and then say, is it possible to sin against so much goodness? Granting there may be found such depravity in the heart of man, still you must allow that such a representation both of the justice and the mercy of God, if any thing can, will awaken a thought in you of returning to God, will bend your stubborn will, and make you hate iniquity.

It is highly unreasonable therefore to charge that doctrine with encouraging sin, which not only does not allow it, but which affords the strongest motives to cause us to abstain from it, and gives the highest ideas of its evil, and of the purity of the law which forbids it.

## SUNDAY IX.—CHAP. IX.

### THE EVILS ARISING FROM IGNORANCE OF THE LAW.

In the two former chapters we have explained the perfection and design of the law; its perfection, as requiring unsullied obedience under the penalty of condemnation to eternal punishment; its design, as leading men to flee for safety to Christ, and to repose their hope upon his merits. Wherever this perfection and design are misunderstood, wherever a lower opinion of its purity is indulged, or a different view of its design is entertained, there, errors of the most dangerous kind prevail, which it will now be my business to explain.

1. Ignorance of the law of God must leave you in a fatal mistake respecting your real character before him. You will imagine that you stand upon honorable terms with your Maker, and have continued from your birth a fit object for his favor, provided you have fallen into no infamous transgressions. You will not confess yourself a criminal, justly exposed to the wrath of God, merely because you come short in duty, or offend in many points of less moment. The knowledge that judgment is

come upon all men to condemnation, is only derived from a just view of the law; therefore till you perceive that it requires sinless perfection, and on failure of this justly pronounces its curse upon you, you cannot acknowledge yourself to be a guilty ruined sinner in the sight of God.

More especially if you have had some early sense of your duty towards God, and have for conscience sake refrained from the sins common to your age and condition of life; in this case, ignorance of the law will leave you under a strong conceit of your own safe and happy state. Calls to repentance you will think belong to those only who have been enslaved by open vices, from which you have been always free; to those who have never led that innocent life from their youth up, which you have done. Self-flattery will stir up in your heart resentment against all attempts to make you know yourself, and to bring you before God with true humiliation and faith in his Son. Every thing of this kind will kindle your indignation, as a cruel design to wound your peace, and to make you appear far more wicked in your own eyes than in truth you are.

So capital an error will tend also to frustrate the advantages of a good education, and to pervert even the blessings of God's restraining grace. It will lead you to lay a stress upon them they will not bear, and prevent you feeling the humility they were designed to convey. It will even make that virtuous character which has gained you so much esteem amongst men, prove a greater obstacle in the way of your salvation than gross wickedness proves to others. Great sins carry with them their own condemnation; they have a tendency to excite, on the first lucid interval of consideration, strong confessions of guilt and fervent cries for mercy; whereas a behavior externally regulated by the law of God, imperfectly understood, does but minister fuel to self-sufficiency and self-applause. Hence it is that we read of the Scribes and Pharisees justifying themselves: they were regular, they were decent, they were religious, but ignorant of the spirituality of the law. They could see no need either of their repentance, or of the grace of a Saviour.—In the same false conceit of your own character you will continue whilst ignorant of the law; and either audaciously contradict what God has declared of the guilt of the human race, or equivocate about it till you have reduced it to an empty name.

On the contrary, when, to use the apostle's emphatical term, "the commandment has slain you;" when you have considered and allowed the demands of the law, and its penalty upon the least defect, then, without disgust or hesitation, you will confess your guilt and sinfulness; you will own that you are condemned by a law which claims him for its author who only is able to save or to destroy.—Whatever sins therefore you may have escaped, either by the influence of education or the restraints of grace, and whatever degree of just reputation you have gained amongst men, though you will be humbly thankful for them, yet still you will remember that these advantages alter not your state respecting God, though they have happily prevented the multiplication of your crimes. Though innocent of those flagrant iniquities which abound in the world, you will confess yourself a transgressor justly liable to eternal punishment, if dealt with according to your deserts.

Happy conviction of guilt! which performs the beneficent office, the Baptist discharged of old, preparing the way of the Lord, and rendering his salvation inestimably precious to the soul.

2. Ignorance of the law produces corrupt principles of obedience. The blessed God has, by right of creation, an indefeasable claim to our submission.

This claim he has enforced by his own express command; He has added also the highest commendations of an obedient spirit, and promised to it an everlasting reward. But perverse construction is too generally put upon the encouragement he has thus given to holiness, where the law is not understood: and in consequence the very obedience paid to his commandments is paid upon false principles, such as render it odious in God's sight. Thus some regard the precepts which enjoin liberality to the needy, and are very large in their donations, hoping by this to atone for their lewdness and sensuality; for they say, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy." Others are conscientiously true to their word, and faithful to all their engagements, flattering themselves that such integrity will counterbalance their pride and profaneness, by saying, "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and a just weight is his delight." Others, and if possible a worse sort, multiply exercises of devotion as a commutation for their injustice and insincerity, their malicious or covetous temper, confiding in the promises made to prayer and diligent attendance on the means of grace.

From such hateful motives does that morality and devotion, of which many are so conceited, often take its rise. Motives springing from an opinion which reduces the sinfulness of sin to a venial infirmity, which soothes our pride by exalting to an extravagant rate the value of our polluted services, and which even encourages disobedience, by supposing an offender against the law of God able to make compensation for his sin. Yet most offensive to God as this opinion is, nothing but the true knowledge of the law can effectually subvert it. The law, by pronouncing a curse on every thing short of sinless perfection, leaves no ground for any composition with sin. By rejecting with dreadful menaces all human attempts as far too poor to make satisfaction to its authority, whenever violated, it leaves no possibility of supposing that obedience in some instances can be of force to atone for the want of it in others. It compels the less atrocious sinner, as well as the great one, to confess himself insolvent, and to own that nothing can administer relief in his case which is not equal to the demands of the law.

3. Though you may be possibly free from the gross, but common error of fancying that some sins may be overlooked, lost as it were in the blaze of superior goodness, still, if you are ignorant of the nature of the law, you will be apt to entertain an impious conceit of the merit of your good works. Instead of maintaining the absolute necessity of practising and of abounding in them as the only visible vouchers that you believe in Jesus; as the infallible evidence of the truth of your repentance and conversion, in which light it is impossible too highly to extol their use, or enforce their practice: through ignorance of the law, you will suppose your own personal righteousness and that of the Redeemer to have the same sort of weight with God, to act in the same capacity, and have at least a joint influence in procuring your pardon and salvation.—Many in fact who possess a sense of religion, do thus dangerously deceive themselves. They endeavor to do their duty, mortifying their lusts, and leading a devout life. On this account though they are confessedly guilty in many points, yet their own goodness they are confident will considerably contribute to recommend them to God, and the merits of Christ, they trust, will make up what is wanting.—Of consequence, so long as they fall into no gross sin, but continue regular, honest, and attentive to religious duties, they are satisfied that they have done their part, and that there is such a worth in their sincere, though imperfect obedience, as



will procure them acceptance with God and eternal life.

This refined error necessarily results from ignorance of the law; and unsuspected of evil, keeps firm possession of the mind till the law is understood. Yet no error can abound more with self-contradiction or with affront to God. With palpable self-contradiction; since this is supposing that at the very time you confess yourself under the guilt of sin for omissions and defects; at the very time you need a pardon as offending in many things, there can still be sufficient excellency about you to obtain favor with God. It is to suppose, that even whilst conscience accuses you, and the law condemns you as a sinner for disobedience, you still possess such a fund of righteousness as will have a considerable influence in making reconciliation for you. Strange contradiction! To confess yourself guilty and implore pardon, and yet at the same time to cherish a hope of being favorably regarded on your own account? Surely to implore pardon implies that you lie at the feet of mercy without any plea, but the compassion of God.—Whereas to trust, as a coadjutor with Christ, in your own obedience, supposes a high degree of worth in yourself.

Besides, by holding this error, your affront to God is as notorious as the contradiction in which it involves you. You make the glorious Redeemer undertake your ransom merely to render our deficient duties meritorious, and our sins inoffensive.—You make his sinless life, his precious death, and mediatorial undertakings serve no other purpose than that of erecting a pedestal on which human worth may stand exalted, and be displayed in false colors. According to this scheme, the pardon of rebels against the Most High, and the reception of leprous sinners into the bosom of heaven, (effects, than which nothing can be greater, benefits, than which nothing can be richer,) are owing to the work of our own hands, and the virtues of our own character, in conjunction with Christ.

Now what greater affront can be offered to that divine goodness which interposed to save us when we were lost, than thus to divide the honor of our acceptance between Christ and ourselves? What more daring opposition to God the Father, who has given Christ for salvation to the ends of the earth, than to trust in our own obedience, as having partly at least, merit to procure it for ourselves? What more plain denial of the Scripture, which so expressly ascribes, and so entirely appropriates the salvation of sinners, from first to last, to the praise of the glory of God's grace in Christ Jesus? Compare, for instance, this self-exalting doctrine with Isaiah's most sublime account of the combat and the conquest of the Redeemer, and then conclude how injurious it must be to his honor to regard your own works as coadjutors with him. The prophet, in surprise at the appearance of a most majestic personage, asks, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" that is, from the country and from the capital of the implacable enemies of the people of God. To which the Redeemer replies, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Upon this the prophet renews his inquiry, "Wherefore" (if thou art come not to destroy but to save) "art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" To this the Redeemer answers, "I have trodden the wine-press;" my foes I have crushed, I have trampled them under my feet: but they were thy enemies, sin, death, and Satan. "I have trodden the wine-press" by myself "alone," too great in my power to want an associate, and too jealous of my honor to accept of an assistant; "of the people there was none with me;" the sal-

vation of sinners in all its parts is my act, even mine ONLY: yours be all the benefit, mine all the glory. Isa. lxiii. 1—3.

The same doctrine is uniformly taught by all the inspired penmen. Yet so pleasing to the human heart is the thought of assuming something to ourselves in the grand affair of our salvation, that nothing but the right knowledge of the law can make the attempt appear in its proper degree of guilt. This indeed will, because it fixes with the greatest precision the value of good works, and the place of human obedience. The law will not suffer you to consider the most conscientious mode of obedience in any other light, than as a testimony that you believe with godly sincerity the delightful truth; that Jesus purged away your sins by the sacrifice of himself; for which unspeakable benefit you love him, you keep his commandments, and you abhor those iniquities which made him suffer and die.

To think and live thus is Christian obedience; of quite another color and complexion from that which springs from every other motive. This is "to use the law lawfully," not as interfering with the Redeemer, or shading his glory by encouraging the expectations of life from obedience to its commands, but as a clear revelation of the infinite demerit of sin, and of the absolute need of Christ's interposition, "who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

4. Self-preference, and a conceit of personal perfection in the saints, together with all their train of mischievous consequences, are owing to the ignorance of God's law.

The slightest observer of mankind may easily observe that pride is naturally the ruling passion in every heart, and that we covet in all things to have the pre-eminence. Hence not only beauty of person, possession of wealth, reputation of learning, or the distinction of noble birth, but even our spiritual attainments, become strong temptations to the indulgence of pride. Thus of old we find a numerous party amongst the Jews rendered conspicuous by their religious zeal, who, elated by their fancied superior grace, cried out, "Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou." Isa. lxv. 5. The same persons who thought so highly of themselves, judged it impossible for notorious sinners to be pardoned, and treated them with insufferable disdain. The like self-preferring spirit governs many at this day, who stand distinguished for their strictness and punctuality in religious offices. Now to purge out this pharisaical leaven is the peculiar work and office of the law of God. It is not enough to tell those who highly esteem themselves for their religious excellences, that they owe them to the free gift of God; this, with the Pharisee, they will allow, and yet value themselves on account of the gift. Neither is it sufficient to remind them of the blemishes which cleave to them, sully their best performances, and take all pretence to self-esteem. For these they will place to the score of human infirmity and the imperfection of human obedience, still proudly dwelling in their own thoughts, on the manifest difference between themselves and others. But then you lay the axe to the root of the tree, when you make such self-conceited professors of religion understand, that after all they have done or received, and notwithstanding the high thoughts they have of themselves, the curse of the law is upon all them "that continue not in all things written therein to do them;" that they are therefore not only imperfect, but lost, if dealt with as they deserve; that notwithstanding all their aspiring pretensions and glittering attainments, they can no more than the wicked answer the demands made upon them by the law, but stand

as liable as they to its condemnation, and remain equally destitute of any plea for their justification, but the mercy and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus no room is left for self-admiration: for whatever difference there may be between one sinner and another, respecting outward obedience or degrees of sanctification, the law will suffer no man living, to imagine he stands accepted with his Creator on account of his own obedience. But if every man who is in a state of salvation is thus compelled by the law to acknowledge the blessing is wholly of grace, then boasting and self-exaltation are utterly excluded.

The conceit of personal perfection likewise in the saints, is maintained only by ignorance of the law of God. For it is impossible that such polluted creatures as we are, should ever dream that after our highest attainments, there remains upon us no charge of sin, if we knew the full extent of the law, which condemns the least failure, and allows not the very least imperfection. In every instance, on every occasion, it charges us,

With act intense, and unremitted nerve,  
To hold a course unflinching.

It commands us not only to serve the Lord, but to serve him with all our strength; not only to love our neighbor, but to love him as ourselves; and to demonstrate we do both by every temper, by every word, by every desire, and by every thought. When you have your eye fixed upon the law, so spiritual in its demands, and enjoining such perfection of obedience, you will most readily acquiesce in that humbling confession of the inspired Solomon, "There is not a just man upon earth, that liveth and sinneth not." You will use, from a deep conviction of your own sinfulness, that confession so expressive of true humility, and of the perfection of the law of God: "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

To conclude; you may learn from what has been now laid before you, that if you desire to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ upon principle and sound conviction, you must thoroughly acquaint yourself with the nature and design of the law of God. Like a faithful mirror, it will discover your poverty and sinfulness: it will make the mercy of God in Christ Jesus appear as great and glorious in your eyes, as it is declared to be in the Bible. Then you will live by faith in the Son of God, pleading his costly sacrifice and perfect righteousness with all humility at the throne of grace, as the only foundation of your hope towards God.

And as a prodigal son, who, through folly and sin, has brought himself into a state of disease and ruin, will, when duly affected by a sense of his condition, most thankfully acknowledge the kindness of a tender parent, who, notwithstanding all his vileness, receives him with forgiveness and embraces him with love, so will you, deeply impressed by the sight of your sinfulness manifested by the law, intensely desire to serve that God, who took pity upon you when utterly ruined, loved you when you possessed not one single feature of comeliness, and who loves you still in the midst of much prevailing unworthiness. Thus those two universal and mighty principles of disobedience, self-confidence and self-conceit, will be expelled, and a rational humility productive of universal holiness will be established. Daily convinced that if God were to enter into judgment with you, you must be found guilty and worthy of death; you will adore, love, and obey him who hath redeemed you from the curse of the law, purchased for you a crown of life, and called you to a throne of glory.

## SUNDAY X.—CHAP. X.

## OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

In almost every page of Scripture excellent things are spoken of the power of faith; and whatever some may boast of their good works and meritorious virtues, the good effects of which in society may justly be extolled; still, so long as the authority of the Bible remains, it is a decided point, that to be without faith in Christ, is to be actually exposed to the wrath of God.

Every one therefore ought most carefully to search the Scripture, in order to inform himself of the essential properties of this fundamental grace. Thus will he be secured on the one hand from an enthusiastic idea of its nature, and on the other from a degradation of it into a barren and worthless notion.

The shortest and plainest method to determine its nature will be, I apprehend, to ascertain that peculiar excellency was in those who were highly commended by the Lord Jesus for the greatness of their faith in him, and what was their fault whom he rebuked for unbelief. When these two points are once determined, it is hoped the nature of faith will be so clearly laid open as to prevent erroneous opinions concerning it, and to deliver all serious readers from that perplexity which, amidst the various disputes about it, they find it difficult to avoid.

The first instructive example which I select in order to explain and determine the precise nature of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is that of the Centurion, mentioned Matt. vii. Warmed with an active benevolence, and sympathizing with an afflicted member of his family, he earnestly applied to the Redeemer, begging that he would have pity upon his servant, whom he had left grievously tormented with the palsy. The faith which inspired the Centurion's heart, and prevailed with him to make this request, though perfectly known to Jesus, was not to the surrounding multitude. They could not tell, whether he might not come glad, as one in a desperate case, to catch at any thing, which had the least appearance of a remedy. Our Lord therefore replies to him in such a manner, as he knew would bring forth the most undeniable proof of his faith; he saith, "I will come and heal him." But the amiable modesty of this great believer would not suffer him to think of the honor of receiving such a guest under his roof. He answers, therefore, that it was wholly unnecessary for Jesus to trouble himself to come; "Speak the word only," says he, "and my servant shall be healed;" adding, that he was no less assured of the power of Christ over all bodily diseases, both to remove and inflict them at his pleasure, than he was of his own authority to command his soldiers.

"When Jesus heard it, he marvelled:" he was struck with admiration at the infinitely grand and just idea which this Roman officer had conceived of his power, though he was in outward appearance the meanest of men.

To make therefore his faith eternally conspicuous, and at the same time most clearly to ascertain the essential nature of that grace which was to be the instrument of salvation to every member of his church, "Jesus said unto them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, Many shall come from the east and the west," that is, possessed and governed by the same precious faith you now see exercised towards me; "and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

Examine now what was the faith of this Cen-



tion. It was evidently a firm persuasion of the almighty power and goodness of Christ, producing a dependence upon him, and an application to him for help and deliverance in favor of his afflicted servant. By consequence, true faith in Jesus is that knowledge of his character and office which inclines the heart to depend upon him for continual help in our spiritual need.

This is confirmed by another very remarkable instance, that of the Canaanitish woman. Hearing of the arrival of Jesus in the country near which she dwelt, she came unto him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; but he answered her not a word." Nay, he seems absolutely to refuse her request, giving for a reason, that his ministry must be confined by him to the Jews. And when entreated yet again, he adds a still more mortifying and discouraging reply, that it was not meet for him to display his mercy amongst the heathen, who, through their idolatry and other pollutions, were become, like dogs, impure before God; that this was to be confined by him to the church of God, his children by covenant and profession.

The woman acknowledges the justness of what our Lord urged: and she said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Let me only have such kindness as the dogs which belong to a family enjoy: amidst that plenty of miraculous cures which thou art bestowing on the Jews, bestow the fragments of this one upon me, who am a poor distressed heathen: for by these they will suffer no greater loss than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs.

Then Jesus answered, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matt. xv. 21.

Here also every eye must perceive what was so illustrious in this woman: it was her persevering adherence to the Lord Jesus Christ for help and deliverance. In the midst of the greatest discouragements, she remained patient, yet importunate, and resolutely depended for relief upon the grace which she was persuaded dwelt so richly in him.

From this instance then, no less clearly than from the former, faith in Jesus is determined precisely to mean the reliance of the heart on him for help and deliverance.

The same truth is as strongly proved from the fault plainly charged on those whom Jesus rebuked for their unbelief.

In the eighth chapter of St. Luke we are informed that our Lord, fatigued with his abundant labors of love, fell asleep as he was sailing with his disciples. In the mean time the weather suddenly changed, and a storm came on. The disciples exerted their utmost skill in the management of the vessel; but in vain. The waves breaking in, filled her, so that she began to sink; and they giving themselves up for lost, ran to Jesus, shrieking out, "Master, Master, we perish."

Their cries awoke him: he instantly rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a calm. Upon which he immediately turns with this reproof upon his disciples. "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" Mark iv. 38.

In this instance also, you see it was want of assurance in the power of their divine Master, even when destruction in all appearance was overwhelming them: it was doubting his ability to gather the stormy winds in his hand, and to prevent the raging floods from overflowing them: it was yielding to the fear of death when it seemed opening its jaws to devour them, which our Lord rebukes, as a demonstration of their unbelief. And justly too, since after the many miracles they had seen him perform, they had abundant cause to rely on his power and good-

ness, even in a greater danger than this; for though their vessel had sunk, he who gave sight to the blind, could have saved them all by making them walk firmly on the water, as he afterwards enabled one of their number to do.

To avoid being tedious, only one instance more shall be produced.

In the ninth of St. Mark, we have a remarkable relation of "a father, greatly distressed on account of the disorder of his son," bringing him to the disciples. Finding them unable to heal him, and dispirited at the sight of his son's misery, together with the remembrance of its long continuance, he was afraid this possession might surpass even the power of Jesus himself. Expressing therefore his doubts and fears, he saith unto him, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;'" that is, to him who is immovably persuaded of my all-sufficient power. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief;" in other words, "I do now sincerely trust in thee as able to help me: I am touched with grief and shame to think there should be so much unbelief in my heart; O forgive and remove it, that I and my son may be thoroughly cured; I of my spiritual, and he of his corporeal disease."

Instances, without number, might be brought; but these alleged are fully sufficient to determine, what is the precise meaning of that divine grace, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:—they prove that it means the affiance of the soul in Jesus Christ for help and deliverance.

If it should be said, that the Centurion and the Canaanitish woman showed their faith, the disciples and the distressed father their unbelief, with respect only to temporal evils; therefore, that these are not proper examples to determine the nature of that faith to which the salvation of the soul is promised, the answer is obvious: That the difference in the nature of the benefits which are the objects of desire by no means infers a difference in the principle of faith. It was by one and the same kind of faith, we are assured, that Noah built the ark, that Abraham offered his son, that Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. These acts, though different from each other in their respective ends, proceeded from one and the self-same principle. In like manner, whether trust in the power and all-sufficiency of Jesus be exercised in seeking deliverance from temporal or spiritual evil, from wants, more in number or less, it is still the same divine grace relying upon the same glorious power.

Indeed, the extent of true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does and must reach as far as our necessities; therefore a particular knowledge of our wants, and of the exercise of faith with respect to the supply of them, will afford the most ample view of the extent of his grace.

First, then, as soon as we compare our lives with the rule of our duty, the law of God, accusations of guilt cannot but pour on us from every side. Each of the commandments, spiritually understood, according to the explanation given in the sermon on the mount, has sins of commission or omission to lay to our charge. God and our own conscience tell us, that our offences have been not merely errors of ignorance, but sins against light and knowledge; the effects of a proud rebellious spirit against the most high God.

Now to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is, under the heart-felt conviction of such guilt, and in abhorrence of it, "to depend on his blood as the propitiation which God himself hath set forth for our sin." It is to make use of this plea alone, that the hand

of provoked Justice may not seize, nor the arm of Omnipotence destroy our soul, "Jesus was wounded for those very transgressions whereof my conscience is afraid: and bruised for those very iniquities I am now bewailing with a godly sorrow." In despair of ever receiving pardon through the merit of anything we can do to help ourselves, or through the unenvananted mercy of God, it is to place our whole confidence in Jesus, "as made a sin-offering for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is under a consciousness of daily sin, and of the infinite holiness of God; to esteem Christ as our passover; to be persuaded that the merit and virtue of his blood is our whole safeguard from deserved wrath: just as the Israelites of old looked on the blood sprinkled on their doors as their whole safeguard from the destroying angel.

Further—Another great evil to which all men feel themselves subject, so soon as they come to any knowledge of their condition with respect to God, is that of a depraved understanding. They perceive that their apprehensions of the ever-blessed God and his law, of sin and their own demerit, are deplorably wrong; they confess themselves children of darkness, in need of divine illumination to conquer their stubborn ignorance, and to remove their numberless prejudices against the truth of God; to take from them those mists which arise from inordinate affection, and that blindness to spiritual objects which prevents their effectual impression upon the mind.

Now to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is, in the midst of these circumstances, to make application to him as one able to enlighten the understanding, and to secure it from all the delusions of false reasonings and imaginary schemes of serving God. It is, to make request to him for instruction, who through the tender mercy of God came to visit a world "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," to the intent "that all who believe in him should not walk in darkness, but have the light of life abiding in them." It is, with the meekness of a child, simply to believe what we are told by him, without murmuring or disputing. It is, as absolutely to depend day by day on the teaching of Christ, through his word and Spirit, for the knowledge of all things needful to salvation; as a submissive pupil depends upon the instructions of a master whose abilities in learning are universally celebrated.

Again—When you desire and earnestly endeavor to live in obedience to the spiritual commandments of God, without which a course of sobriety and external religion is vain; you will immediately feel your own weakness, just as Sampson did the loss of his strength, when he was rising, after his locks were shorn, to combat the Philistines—you will find your nature violently inclined to evil, and the desires of your heart to be fixed upon vanity and sin—you will see yourself surrounded with a thousand temptations to draw you from God, and to discourage you from living in conscientious obedience to him.

In these circumstances, you will soon feel it is a work far surpassing human power to alter the course of nature; to bring back those affections to God, which have been always alienated from him; or to reduce a will that has long been lawless to subjection, to the control of God in all things. You will feel little ability, after having walked in the path of self-will as the only path of happiness, to forsake it, and to tread the rough and thorny one of self-denial. Yet such an inward change true holiness requires; every thing short of it is superficial, leaving the soul unprepared for the temper and happiness of heaven.

In these circumstances to believe in Jesus Christ is to depend upon him, as given by God to purify men for himself, and to purge them as a refiners

fire does the silver from its dross. It is to be looking to him with confidence for the gradual performance of a work in your soul, no less necessary for your salvation than that already completed for you on the cross. It is, daily to make application to him, as one on whom God hath laid all your help, and whom he hath given to save his people from their sins. It is to bring before him those vile affections which are natural to your heart; assured, that though your own resolutions and efforts have been frustrated from time to time, and wrought in you no cure, yet the power of the Lord will work mightily with you, and at length give you strength and victory.

Thus far the extent of true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has been considered as reaching to a dependence on his grace and power for present deliverance from that darkness, guilt, and reigning sin, in which the whole posterity of Adam is involved.

But as our continuance on earth is exceeding short; as this life must soon be lost in one which knows no end, where either the dismal effects of unpardoned sin must be eternally endured, or the exquisite joy of God's love delight the heart; so the "extent of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ must be enlarged to have relation to that eternity which is so near and important." To believe in Christ, therefore, comprehends a firm confidence that you shall abundantly experience both his power and love, when every human help and comfort fail, and present objects are no more. Faith rests assured on his word, that the soul shall not wander desolate and forsaken in the unknown world, nor the dead body remain a prisoner for ever in the loathsome grave; but that the one shall be raised by him, and fashioned according to his own glorious body, and the other be admitted into that blessed kingdom where he employs his infinite wisdom and almighty power for the happiness of his people. In habitual expectation of mortality, it commends the spirit into his hands, knowing he is able to keep what is committed to him unto that day; persuaded that he is the life and the forerunner of his people gone before to prepare a place for them, from whence he will come and receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also.

This definition of faith in Christ, that it is an abiding heart-felt trust upon him for help and deliverance; a trust that he will save you from ignorance by revealing his light; and from guilt by imparting the merit of his blood and righteousness: that out of weakness he will make you strong by his power, and enrich you through all eternity with his love: this definition, I say, has this advantage, that it is plain and intelligible to every capacity. Men of learning frequently condemn the laying great stress on the doctrine of salvation by faith alone as perplexing, and liable to be misunderstood by common understandings. After all that we can say about it, they tell us, the common people will be still at a loss to conceive what faith in Christ means. Could this objection be made good, it would overturn the whole credit of the gospel, for that perpetually inculcates faith as the root of all the fruits of righteousness. And indeed it is certain, that whatever is of great moment to salvation, must be plain and easy to the comprehension of all, who will be at the pains of seeking for the knowledge of it. But in fact, there is no place for this objection, when faith is represented to be a dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Are not the poorest among the people to the full as well acquainted as the rich and learned, with the nature of promises and the confidence due to them, when made by persons of power and integrity? Is any one of a common capacity, at a loss to conceive,



that the ignorant who would learn, must depend upon their teacher? Or that those whose debts are increased above what they are able to pay, must be cast into prison, or stand beholden to some surety, or some act of grace, or both? What difficulty can there be in understanding that those whose enemies are mighty and tyrannical, and not to be resisted by their own strength, must look for defence and refuge to one mightier than they? Now only transfer these most plain and familiar ideas to the divine Redeemer, and you have at once a full and distinct notion of what it is to believe in his name; it is what the lowest are not only capable of understanding, but what they can all feel. For when we explain the nature of faith, we make our appeal to those very feelings which are the most forcible of any implanted in the human breast—to the fear of danger, to the hope of deliverance, to confidence of help, to gratitude for benefits unspeakably great.

### SUNDAY XI.—CHAP. XI.

#### THE ADVANTAGES OF A JUST CONCEPTION OF THE NATURE OF FAITH.

In the preceding chapter we endeavored to give a distinct and clear idea of the nature of faith, as it is determined by examples in Scripture, in which the want of it was censured, or its excellence commended. We stated it to be a steadfast and active trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Now, as many and great advantages flow from a just conception of the nature of so important a grace as this, while on the other hand the most serious evils may arise from an imperfect or false idea of it, I propose in this chapter to point out the advantages which evidently result from receiving the definition of it already given.

I. It evidently excludes those abuses which a false idea of the nature of faith has in many cases produced.

That many and grievous abuses of faith should abound, is not strange; since the incomparable blessings promised to it, work like so many bribes upon our natural self-love, to make us deal dishonestly, and in the want of reality to embrace a counterfeit.

Thus, for instance, it is most common for speculative faith to pass for genuine faith. When a learned reasoner has compared the glorious prophecies concerning Jesus with their events, and seen the amazingly exact accomplishment; when he has canvassed his doctrine and miracles, till his understanding is furnished with arguments enough to silence all who doubt or disbelieve the truth of the gospel, he is apt to become confident he is a true believer, and that his faith as a Christian is perfect and entire, lacking nothing; he is confident of this very thing; whilst his ruling tempers utterly disgrace his faith, and give the witnesses of his example abundant cause to think most contemptuously of it.

To convince a man of this character, that he most shamefully imposes upon himself in calling his knowledge by the name of faith, will, I grant, be very difficult. But if any mean can do it, it must be the proof that his acquaintance with the doctrines of Jesus, his ready assent to their truth, his alacrity in their defence, still leave him only upon a level with those who openly reject the gospel; that is, they leave him equally a stranger to any active dependence on Jesus Christ for help and deliverance; that he, no more than an absolute infidel, looks up day by day as a poor, ignorant, sinful, helpless creature, for the relief of his necessities, to the all-sufficient Saviour. Consequently, this spe-

culative, self-satisfied believer may perceive, that the faith in the Son of God which the Scripture requires, and which only will be of benefit to his soul, is a thing entirely of another kind from that assent he has given to the truths of the gospel.

In the very same way of trial, another detestable abuse of the doctrine of faith, to which the love of sin inclines us, will be fully discovered. No sooner was the gospel way of salvation preached to the Gentile world, and the name of Jesus glorified, than Satan, jealous of his own empire, prevailed over a large body of professing Christians to boast they had faith in Christ, and were complete in him, whilst they were living in sin, in hatred of renovation of mind, in contempt of personal obedience and of the means of grace. They confidently said they knew him; they gloried in the imagination that Christ's righteousness was their holiness, whilst they refused to follow his example, and trampled upon his commandments. In every revival of the power of the gospel, the same error has revived also; and what is said of envy with respect to merit,

Envy, the shadow, proves the substance true,

holds good in this case. Wherever the true gospel is enforced, this dreadful abuse of it will more or less make its appearance.\*

But this delusion, which has justly obtained the name of *Antinomian faith*, from its enmity to the control of God's most holy law, can find no reception where faith is understood to be a constant lively dependence on the Redeemer for present help and deliverance: because nothing can be more opposite to this dependence than the blasphemous opinion that you are not to receive from him the graces of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can be more contrary to the exercise of faith in him, than the corrupt imagination, that you need not rely upon his power to conquer your corruptions, and to bless you by turning you from your iniquities. Nothing can more effectually destroy all communication betwixt the Redeemer and our souls, than so to interpret, the efficacy of his divine obedience, and most precious blood, as if no purification of the soul was wanted. This licentious notion, in its very nature, absolutely excludes any present application to the Redeemer, and consequently any present dependence to receive from him wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification. However vehemently it may be maintained by many to be the purest faith, it certainly has not one single property of Scripture faith in Christ.

Again—by adhering to this definition of faith deduced from Scripture examples, that is, the lively and active trust of the soul on Jesus Christ, to receive from him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, you will be secure from confounding with true faith opinions imbibed only from education. Most men, engrossed by earthly pursuits, and feeling nothing of the importance of the objects of faith, take for granted the truth of the national religion, be what it may, and regu-

\* St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, saw with their own eyes this abominable perversion of the truth; and take much pains in all their Epistles to guard against its poison. In Germany, and in England, as soon as ever the glorious Reformation took place, this strong delusion of an Antinomian faith begun to prevail. It is therefore so far from being any just objection against the preaching of faith, to urge that it is abused to licentiousness, that it proves on the contrary, that the doctrines of salvation are apostolically set forth; and therefore Satan has recourse to his ancient device of supporting his own kingdom by endeavoring to bring this doctrine into reproach.

larly conform to its institutions. After having done so for a course of years, they still more rashly also take it for granted, that nothing less than true faith could have kept them so long constant and regular in public worship without ever doubting the truth: whilst in fact, gross carelessness, love of money, or immoderate application to business, have prevented their thinking upon religion as a subject worth their attention.

Now if you interrogate such deluded but confident formalists. Whether they were ever painfully convinced of their own natural ignorance and blindness, or of the depravity of their hearts?—Whether they ever with grief of soul confessed the provocation of their sins, and the power of inbred lusts, and in the affecting view of both, have made application to Jesus for relief and remain in dependence on him for the same? These searching questions will at once discover the refuge of lies, and prove that what they imagine to be faith in Jesus, is nothing better than vain and contemptible credulity.

Nay, further, if you ask these formalists, who assume the name of believers in Christ, Upon what do you ground your hope of salvation? Their answer is, That they have used their best endeavors to lead a good life; that God is merciful, and knows their frailty. A foundation of hope this, very different from what the prophets and apostles have laid—for they, instead of teaching men to expect forgiveness merely because God is merciful, and because we endeavor to lead a good life, proclaim the death and sacrifice of the only Son of God to be the only means of reconciliation. So far from flattering us that our unassisted endeavors will succeed in the great work of living a Christian life, they command us to be continually “seeking the Lord and his strength,” for this very purpose. Judge, therefore, how entirely the faith of the formalist differs from true faith: since it leaves a man in gross darkness concerning the way in which sin is to be pardoned, and power over it obtained.

There is still another mistake concerning the nature of faith, which this plain and easy definition effectually discovers. Many men of the best intentions, and inflamed with earnest desires for the glory of God, and the good of souls, have represented faith in Christ to be a *particular revelation*, separately and supernaturally imparted to every individual believer the moment he truly believes: whereby his soul is enlightened and the forgiveness of his sins made self-evident by the force of inward feeling alone.

Now that the blessed God can impress on the mind so strong a sense of pardon as to leave a repenting sinner, beyond all doubt, satisfied of his coming from him, none can question. And that in many instances, God is most graciously pleased in this manner to manifest himself and his love, none can dispute, who have been happily acquainted either with the lives or deaths of the excellent of the earth. By this manifestation, have martyrs been enabled to sing in the midst of the flames; and not only to endure all that is most dismaying to nature, but to triumph over it. By this manifestation of divine love, thousands are emboldened to continue faithful to God and their duty, amidst the scoffs and insults of the careless and profane.

Nevertheless, it is one thing to feel joy and exultation, another to be conscious you are depending upon Jesus Christ the Lord for the supply of all your wants;—one thing to build your evidence of pardon on a transporting sensation, quite another to infer it from your dependence on him, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to all that believe in his name. And to suppose the reality of faith in him can be

evidenced no other way than by feeling an inward testimony of the pardoning love of God, is just as gross a mistake as it would be to suppose that credit is to be given to the written promise of an affectionate friend, no longer than he himself enforced it by repeated declarations of his particular love. To act thus, in every other case would argue violent suspicion of the veracity of him who gives the promise; how then with reason can it be made the only test of faith in Christ, that you should have irresistible evidence of his love in your own heart superadded to the declarations of his gospel.

It is needful in treating on the subject of faith in Jesus Christ, to guard against this mistake of its nature, because, wherever the power of religion prevails, many are apt to place their dependence on the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins, by an inward feeling. They make it their whole business to seek for the evidence of their pardon from doubtful sensations, rather than from the written word. They speak as if nothing was worth acknowledging as a blessing from God, whilst they possess not such an evidence of pardon in their own hearts. Others also, with grief it must be acknowledged, have so imposed upon themselves, as to mistake a transient emotion of joy for real faith, while they are strangers to any true humiliation for sin, or abhorrence of it in the heart. In the mean time, a third class, through the same mistake, have been overwhelmed with terrors, and led to pass sentence on themselves as destitute of faith and without Christ in the world, at the very time when they were seeking his help and grace as all their salvation; and consequently were true and sincere believers.

Another great advantage arising from the definition of saving faith here delivered, as implying a lively dependence on Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, is, that it establishes the true believer in solid peace and comfort; and this is a strong evidence that it is Scripturally defined. For the gospel, like a remedy, adapted with astonishing exactness to our frame and condition, is intended to counterbalance all the allurements of temptation. It bestows, even in this world, more than equivalent for what any man can suffer or lose through obedience to God, as well as eternal life in the world to come. It assures every faithful disciple, that reconciliation is made for his iniquity: that he is an object of God's daily care, and an heir of his infinitely glorious kingdom. But the assurance which any particular person possesses that these blessings must appertain to him, must depend upon his certainty that he has true faith. If this point is brought into doubt, his peace departs, his comfort dies away; for all the promises of God's acceptance and special love belong to them, and to them only, who are united to Christ Jesus by a living faith. It is no doubt with any one, whether a true believer is accepted of God; but the doubt so cruelly perplexing to serious minds, and so chilling to their hopes, is, whether they are believers or no.

In order therefore to secure to every believer that peace and comfort, which he has a sure hope from the word of God to enjoy, the evidence which proves the reality and truth of his faith must be both clear and permanent. Of this perfect kind is the evidence which accompanies a lively dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, to supply all our spiritual wants and necessities. This dependence is so easy to be known, that no one can possess it without being conscious of it. For it necessarily implies an intimate and most interesting connection between Christ and the soul, a knowledge of him affecting the heart, and an application to him, daily and persevering. A man therefore who is living in such dependence upon the Son of God, might as reason-



ably call in question the reality of transactions passing between himself and his friends on earth, as of his faith in Jesus. This evidence is also permanent. The sensible comforts of a Christian, it is true, are in their nature fluctuating, but his dependence does not vary as his consolations do. He does not return to the love and practice of sin, after fleeing in deep humility to Jesus as a Redeemer from its curse and power; nor revolt to a self-righteous trust on his own duties and merits, after having made a cordial submission to Christ as the Lord his righteousness. Hence he that is oppressed with gloom, and tormented with fear, lest he should have no part in Christ, merely because he feels no transporting hope in his heart, may be able, when his judgment is better instructed in the nature of faith, to prove himself a believer, by proving his whole dependence to be upon Christ. And in consequence of this proof, the joy, whose absence he was mourning, will spring up and flourish, and, like a fragrant flower in its proper soil, yield a reviving influence to his heart. He will be able thus to express the highest and the purest satisfaction, saying, "In the Lord's word will I rejoice, in the Lord's word will I comfort me."

Besides: dependence upon Jesus for present help and deliverance will prove, from its success, an abiding source of comfort and assurance to the mind. Every sinner exercises trust in the Redeemer from a sense of misery and necessity. He would not cast himself a poor suppliant at his feet, could he be safe without his protection, or satisfied without his peace. But, upon application, the promise of God engages, that the things asked for shall be received. Accordingly, do you depend upon Jesus as your prophet? Behold wisdom from above will begin to enlighten your mind, and an understanding in the way of life will soon be in some measure conferred upon you. Soon the world, sin, and your own heart are discovered to you in a light which you never saw them before. Already God in his perfections, his works, and gospel, is apprehended by you in a different manner from what he was wont to be. The gross ignorance that was in you, is now no more: hence you have the witness in yourself, that your dependence on Christ is no fruitless misplaced dependence. In like manner, when you were first awakened to a sense of your sin, your conscience was full of fears and alarms, and you had no comfortable communion with God: but, now, through a dependence upon the efficacy and merit of his blood, you are set free from condemnation, and have access to God with boldness. In the same way, the strength and power you receive to deny yourself for Jesus' sake, and the change of a headstrong lawless will into meek subjection, which is another effect of dependence on Jesus Christ; proves with the force of demonstration, that your faith is neither formal nor delusive; and, by consequence, that you have an interest in all that belongs to the faithful.

Lastly, it must be added, that an active trust and dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ for help and deliverance, such as our definition of faith supposes, ascribes to him such importance and glory in our salvation, as the Scriptures expressly declare shall be ascribed to him. This will appear evident, from the consideration of a few remarkable passages, both in the Old and New Testaments concerning Christ.

In the seventy-second Psalm, it is foretold of the Redeemer, that "Prayer shall be made to him continually, and daily shall he be praised." This glorious prediction receives a full and complete accomplishment by the continual dependence of all the faithful on Jesus Christ, for the supplies of wisdom, righteousness, and strength, and by their continued

thanks to him for the gift of such inestimable benefits.

The evangelical prophet, Isaiah, abounds with emphatical declarations of the perpetual affiance of believers in Christ Jesus. The conversion of the Gentile world to him is expressed in this manner, "The isles shall wait upon me, and upon mine arm shall they trust." By the same inspired penman, the Redeemer, with a grandeur and richness of mercy becoming his infinite majesty, thus addresses a sinful world:

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God; and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory." Isa. xlv. 22-25.

"Here the Son of God represents himself in all the glory of his divine person, and all the efficacy of his grace, as the object of faith, and the author of salvation. Look unto me, says he, wretched, ruined transgressors, as the wounded Israelites looked unto the brazen serpent; look unto me, dying on the cross as your victim, and obeying the law as your surety. Not by your own strength or virtue, but by dependence on me be ye saved, cleansed from guilt, rescued from the power of sinful tempers, and reconciled to God.

"Do you ask, Who are invited to partake of this inestimable benefit? 'All the ends of the earth.' People of every nation under heaven, of every station in life, of every condition, and of every character, not excepting the chief of sinners.

"Do you say, Is it possible that in this way, so short, so simple, merely by dependence on Christ Jesus, innumerable millions should be saved? It is not only possible, but certain: for 'I am God,' infinite in dignity and power, therefore all-sufficient, yea, omnipotent to save, to save all that come unto me, be their multitude ever so great, or their cases ever so desperate. 'And besides me there is none other;' no person can take any share in this great transaction. Such is my compassionate invitation. And this my inviolable decree; 'I have not only spoken, but I have sworn by myself,' and all my incomprehensible excellences; 'the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness;' that word which relates to the grandest of all subjects, and the most important of all interests, is planned, adjusted, and unalterably determined: 'it shall not return,' neither be repealed by me, nor frustrated by any other. 'To me every knee shall bow;' every son of man that desires to inherit eternal life, shall submit to, and depend upon me; as an unworthy creature, as an obnoxious criminal; he shall obtain the blessing wholly through my atonement. 'To me every tongue shall swear,' renouncing every other trust, they shall repose the confidence of their souls on me alone, and make public confession of this their faith before the whole world: and this shall be the form of their oath, and the tenor of their heart-felt confession; each member of my church shall say, 'Surely,' it is a most wonderful, yet a most faithful saying, extremely comfortable and equally certain; 'Surely in the Lord,' the incarnate Jehovah alone, 'have I righteousness,' to expiate all my iniquities, and satisfy the law; 'and strength,' for an increasing improvement of heart, and sanctification of soul.

"To this sovereign decree the prophet set to, as it were, his seal; or else in a transport of joy he foretells the accomplishment of it: Yes, to him, even to

this great and gracious Redeemer, *shall men come.* I see them flying as clouds for multitude, and as doves for speed. They believe the report of his gospel, and receive of his fulness. Whilst all they that are incensed at him, who cannot away with such absolute dependence upon him, nor bear his pure and holy government, shall be ashamed. The fig-leaves of their own virtues and their own endowments shall neither adorn them for glory, nor screen them from wrath; but shall abandon them to vengeance, and cover them with double confusion. Whilst on the other hand all the seed of Israel, every true believer, shall be justified in the Lord; against these persons no accusation shall be valid, no condemnation take place. Far from it; for so magnificent is the majesty, so surprisingly efficacious are the merits of the Saviour, that in him they shall not only confide, but glory: not only be safe, but triumphant; able to challenge every adversary, and to defy every danger.\*

Whether this text be considered with or without this comment, it plainly proves that Jesus Christ is to be acknowledged as the only author of our salvation; it clearly marks the nature of true faith to be a lively dependence on Christ to receive out of his fulness grace for grace. It shows, that to conceive any thing to be faith less than such absolute and constant dependence on Jesus, is to degrade the importance of the Son of God to his church, and to obscure, if not abolish, his glory. To suppose that you have faith merely because you allow Jesus to have been no impostor in what he taught, or even because you grant his death to have been an atonement for sin, is to glorify him very little, in comparison of maintaining an uninterrupted dependence upon him. In the one case he appears as a common benefactor, to whose past generous deeds we have been much indebted; in the other, as our continual support, of whom we may triumphantly say, "The Lord is my light and my life, whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid?"

To place him in this glorious point of view before the eyes of our mind, the New Testament perfectly concurs with the Old. Thus St. Paul and St. Peter represent the faith of the Christian church to be such a personal dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as subsists between the foundation of a lofty temple and its several parts, which continually bear the whole weight upon it. Ephes. ii. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.—They again explain this dependence by the union of the members of the body to the head, Ephes. iv. 15, 16. whilst Jesus himself compares it to the union of the branches to the vine.—But none of these Scriptural representations can be supposed to be used even with the justness and accuracy common to human writers, unless by faith in the only-begotten Son of God, is meant an abiding heart-felt dependence on him for daily salvation, influences, and blessings.

It would be superfluous to add more Scripture evidence on this head; but it is of the highest importance that you examine yourself, where the stress of your dependence for the good of your soul is placed. To what source are you looking for pardon and strength, comfort and sanctification? To your own good purposes and endeavors, to your own prayers, meditations, and good qualities; or through them all, to that inexhaustible treasury, which God has provided for poor helpless, guilty men, in the

person of our Lord Jesus Christ? Blessed is your condition if you have this testimony in your conscience; that acknowledging your own natural ignorance and blindness, you call upon the name of our Lord Jesus to enlighten your mind, to make his way plain before you, and to give you a strong and distinct perception of the great things concerning your eternal peace. Blessed is your condition, if, feeling your utter incapacity to procure the favor of God by the best of your duties, reformations, or performances, and confounded in your own sight for your great defects, you build all your hope of acceptance with God upon what Christ has done and suffered for you. Blessed is your condition, if afflicted by the exceeding vileness of your corrupt affections, and longing for victory over them, for a more spiritual mind, and for a farther progress in love, both to God and man, you depend upon the renewing, sanctifying grace of Christ, to work this divine change within you. *This* is to believe in the only begotten Son of God without partiality and without hypocrisy. *This* the word of God pronounces to be that dependence on Christ which shall never be confounded! May the Giver of every good and perfect gift create in your soul this unfeigned faith, if you have it not already: and if you have, may he confirm and increase it still more abundantly.

## SUNDAY XII.—CHAP. XII.

ON THE FOUNDATION OF DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST FOR PARDON.

THE same gracious and holy God, who planned the method of recovering lost sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ, has not only required, by his express command, faith in him, but, from the first entrance of sin into the world, he has been manifesting to the world, in various ways and in the fullest manner, the character and glory of the Redeemer, and the safety of all who depend upon him in sincerity and truth.

This testimony, which God has given of his only-begotten Son, is the solid, rational, and immoveable foundation of Christian faith; and so amply does it display the completeness of his salvation, that, as I purpose to prove, there is no part of our dreadful disease and misery, as sinners, for which there is not a sufficient remedy in the perfections he possesses, and in the offices he sustains for the salvation of his church.

To illustrate this: every man, it has been shown above, is chargeable with the guilt of sin against his Creator, and of course stands exposed to the curse of God's violated law, and to the pains of eternal punishment. Let us see, then, what properties there are in the Lord Jesus Christ, sufficient to render him, in this case, the object of our affiance: what sufficient warrant to justify our firm dependence on him, as the propitiation for our sins, in the sight of a holy sin-avenging God?

The answer which the divine record returns to this momentous inquiry, is sufficient to dispel every doubt, and to impart strong consolation to the most guilty soul that earnestly seeks for acceptance with its Maker. For it expressly declares that this Jesus, on whom you are to depend, is one in nature and essence with God; that his "goings forth" (that is, his existence) "have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah v. 2. That to his almighty power, the earth owes all its prolific virtue, and the variety of fruits which it produces for the service of men; that from the worm which crawls unnoticed by us on the surface of the ground, up to the brightest angel before the throne of glory, the Re-

\*For this explanation of the sacred text the reader is indebted to a manuscript of the late pious and exemplary Mr. Hervey. Since the first edition of this work, it has been inserted by Mr. Hervey, in one of his printed Letters to the Rev. Mr. Wesley.



deemer formed them what they are, and still preserves them in their being; for "In the beginning the Word was with God and the Word was God.—All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." John i. 1, 3.—"For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. i. 16, 17.—On account of this original and eternal glory, when the Redeemer is brought into the world, to be a sacrifice for sin, though he was no more in appearance than a weeping babe, though born like the child of some vagabond, in a stable, and laid in a manger; even at this moment the Father saith, Heb. i. 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him." For though abased in this mysterious manner, still he is the Creator and God of angels; he is "God manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy iii. 16. "Immanuel, that is, God with us," is his name whereby he shall be called.

Here then, in this character, drawn not by the erring pencil of man, but by the Spirit of truth in the oracles of God; here behold the proper object of every repenting sinner's dependence. See with what just reason you may confide in him, who possesses all the attributes and perfections of the Godhead; in him, who at the very time his appearance in our flesh was foretold, had his dignity proclaimed by the prophetic herald in this magnificent manner:

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!" Isa. ix. 6.

Had it been only declared by the mouth of the Lord of Hosts, that one of such infinite dignity would be favorable to all humbled and repenting sinners, and would plead in their behalf before his Father, even this simple declaration ought to engage the confidence of the guilty; it would be a sufficient warrant to justify their dependence on him. For if the Redeemer is really possessed of infinite perfections, he must be a fit object of confidence to the soul, supposing he were pleased to declare his merciful disposition toward it. But he has done far more than simply declare his good-will to perishing sinners; the depth of his humiliation, and the sacrifice of his life, present to us indisputable and most affecting proofs that the Redeemer is worthy of our highest confidence. For the same infallible record which assures us that he was in the form of God, worshipped and acknowledged as such in heaven—thinking it no robbery, no usurpation of glory, to be equal with God; assures us, likewise, that in pity to a ruined world, he was content to live and die a substitute and surety for sinful man.

In the fulness of time, according to that counsel of peace between the Father and the Son recorded in the fortieth Psalm, the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, was born into the world, with a body prepared for him by the power of the Holy Ghost. He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Instead of appearing in that royal form the carnal Jews expected, as a visible conqueror of their political foes, he was made lower than men, and counted as no man! and though men of the lowest stations have generally the fewest troubles, *his* case was the reverse; the reverse both of the grandeur of princes, and of the tranquillity of the vulgar. Pre-eminence in the multitude and weight of sorrows was his only distinction. Yet a man of low condition, though overwhelmed with

troubles, may possess a high reputation, at least one untainted; but Jesus descended below this, and submitted to bear the imputation of even being an impostor and a blasphemous. Nay, he stooped still lower, and not only stood as a criminal at the bar of Pilate, but appeared such by imputation before the Judge of the universe. "And the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" whilst other condemned malefactors are charged only with the crimes belonging to themselves, and with but a few of those; the Scripture represents this unparalleled Sufferer as oppressed with the crimes of multitudes, in number like the sands on the sea-shore; a weight more heavy and terrible to sustain than we are able to conceive! But this we know, that the curse of the law was a weight sufficient to crush a world. We know, that they who first experienced it found it to be intolerable; for when legions of angels, which excel in strength, abused that strength against the law, it sunk them from the highest heaven to the lowest misery of hell.

This weight Jesus undertook to bear for us; "he was made sin," that is, a sin-offering, "and a curse for us." He interposed his sacred body between the load of wrath from above, and us the heirs of wrath below. Instead of that high ineffable communion of love in which he dwelt with his Father, he was content to feel the exquisite sorrow of being forsaken of him. Till that distress never had Jesus made a request for pity: he sought none from Pilate; when the sympathizing daughters of Jerusalem wept over him, he meekly advised them to reserve their compassions for themselves and their children. But now at this hour, when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he who was "like a sheep dumb before its shearers," is dumb no longer; the Lamb of God, when brought to this dreadful slaughter, must open his mouth, and pity itself must cry for pity. It was the blasphemous language of his murderers,—"Where is now thy God?" And, behold, so exquisite are the pangs of his distressed soul, that something like the same language escapes from his own mouth!—he cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

So particular is the Scripture testimony in describing the humiliation and death of the Redeemer, and not less explicit in ascertaining both the end for which he humbled himself to the death of the cross, and the everlasting benefits he thus secured to all his faithful dependants. Notwithstanding all the opposition he met with, both from the enemy of sinners and sinners themselves, he obtained a perfect conquest, and died with this transporting shout of victory in his mouth, "It is finished." The debt of penal suffering, the debt of perfect obedience is paid to the law; the powers of hell are vanquished, and God is well pleased.

Ponder then upon this marvellous transaction—upon this horrible torment and death, sustained, not by an angelic or created being, but by "him in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Consider the depth of his abasement, and the extremity of his anguish; all submitted to with no other view than to make an atonement for sin, and to purchase redemption, even the forgiveness of sin, for all who should ever trust in his name! Consider this fact, and then say, Can even invention itself devise, or the most afflicted conscience desire a more sure foundation to trust on for pardon and acceptance with God? What can the law demand of you either as an exemption from suffering its penalty, or as a title to eternal life, which this vicarious obedience and sacrifice of God manifest in the flesh has not abundantly provided in behalf of all true believers?

I will suppose your sins in their malignity and number to be enormous, and to cry with the loudest

cry for vengeance, still, if in anguish of spirit for them, you humbly trust to Jesus for remission, can they have such weight, do you think, to condemn you, as the blood of an incarnate God to take them away. Have your offences dishonored God's law more than the obedience and death of the Redeemer have magnified it? Or have not those transgressions been fully expiated, for which the lawgiver himself was put to death? Though you dare not risk your pardon on the vague notion of mere mercy, now that your understanding is enlightened, and your conscience faithful in its rebukes; though you dare not embrace the fashionable religion, which leaves such awful things as the justice of the Most High and the law of the Most Holy, destitute of their due honor; though you can never trust to obedience and future amendment as any atonement for past transgressions: yet steadfastly fix your eyes on the matchless ransom paid down by Jesus on the cross. See there the glory of the holy God reconciled with the good of the humbled criminal! See there, the justice of God more awful than if mercy had been excluded, and mercy more amiable than if justice had been dispensed with. See, how vengeance and forbearance there meet together: vengeance on the person of the crucified Redeemer, and forbearance for his sake to every believing penitent. See there, wrath and love kiss each other; wrath towards the divine substitute, love to the insolvent and ruined sinner. By this mysterious sacrifice every honor done to the criminal is an honor done to the law, because he receives it only through the obedience and satisfaction paid to it by his surety; and all the respect put upon the law adds respect also to the criminal, because of the divinity of him who undertook to bear his curse and pay his debt.

Is not this ransom then a solemn ground for peace to the broken in heart! A transaction in which God holds forth his only-begotten Son, nailed to a cross, "to be a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and yet the justifier of all them that believe in Jesus!" Is it possible for the powers of darkness to form a cloud through the gloom of which this most glorious truth will not be able to dart light and comfort? May our souls open to receive it! it is a beam from the face of the Redeemer to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

Further; still stronger will the grounds for confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ appear, when you take into your view "the free and gracious manner in which you are invited to become a partaker of the blessings of redemption." The great generally sell even what they call their favors: long services or powerful recommendations are their inducements to confer dignity, or bestow wealth. But far otherwise, as our most impotent condition requires, is the case with respect to forgiveness purchased by the blood of Christ. No impossible or hard condition is previously required on the sinner's part; no works of righteousness are required to be first performed in your own strength, and then pleaded as your recommendation: no set of holy tempers, or stock of moral virtue, to be first acquired. All this righteous practice is to follow upon believing, and to be produced from strength and grace received, through constant application to the Redeemer.—The invitation runs in these most encouraging terms, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money (not one single valuable qualification); yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. lv. 1. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost," to purchase pardon for rebels and enemies to God; of consequence, the only requisite to partake of his grace, is, that you behold yourself that perishing sinner that God saw you would be,

when he delivered up his Son for your offences; and that you are glad to lay hold on this hope set before you. And surely the most fearful doubting mind cannot desire more encouragement to believe: the most dejected conscience cannot conceive a place of refuge more adapted to its distressed condition: nor can even the worst of sinners desire more gracious advances towards peace and reconciliation.

### SUNDAY XIII.—CHAP. XIII.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST FOR PARDON AND INSTRUCTION.

So important is it that man should place a full dependence upon Christ for the pardon of his sin, that God has been pleased to confirm the declaration of his ability to save, by an usual degree of evidence. He has displayed, as we have already seen, the divinity of his person, the merit of his death as an atonement, and the unbounded freeness of his invitation, in order to encourage man to put his trust in him. But besides these there are still further evidences of his power and willingness to save; let me refer you to the intercession of Jesus, who is become our great high-priest; and to the declarations of Scripture, that every one who depends on him shall abundantly receive the blessings which he needs.—What a sure foundation for confidence to the humble repenting sinner does the office of Jesus, as high-priest, afford! "Every high-priest," says the Scripture, "taken from among men, is ordained for men;" for their spiritual interest and advantage; all his influence and power are to be employed in their behalf. With a view to the benefit of man was the office originally and entirely ordained of God. And the things appointed for him to do, prove this; he was to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin; sacrifices to make an atonement, and gifts, on account of which God might vouchsafe to continue his forfeited favor. With the same view the grand qualification indispensably necessary for the execution of this office was a heart that knew how to have compassion on them that are ignorant and out of the way of duty and of safety.

Now this office of high-priest, and all the functions belonging to it, we are taught, "were only designed to serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things;" in other words, to be an outward and visible way of instructing us in the nature of the office which the Lord Jesus Christ sustains in the highest heaven for sinners, and of the benefits they may expect from him. He is made a high-priest of good things to come; "he is entered not with the blood of bulls and of goats into the holy place, which was the figure of the true, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us." He is therefore under the strongest engagements of office to mediate for all that shall come to God by him. And lest we should imagine ourselves too mean to engage his pity, particular mention is made, that he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as we are; yet without sin. Therefore, from an experimental knowledge of the same difficulties and distresses as we are now enduring, he hath that exquisite tenderness of sympathy with us, which would not otherwise have been possible. What then can warrant an unshaken confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon, if the knowledge of him as our great high-priest fail to do it? Is your heart broken for sin, your spirit wounded within you? Parley not with your fears, listen not to the accuser: look unto Jesus, your propitiator, your intercessor; as the wounded, tormented, dying Israelites looked unto the brazen serpent. Look unto



him for healing and for life: look unto him who appears as your advocate, ever living to make intercession for sinners in your distressed condition. He must fail in the engagements of his office, and do violence to the bowels of his mercy, which constitute his fitness for that office, before the humble dependence of a penitent sinner on his blood and intercession shall be disappointed.

If any thing can be added more to engage your confidence in the Redeemer for the remission of your sins when you are sorrowing for them, and convince you on what a strong foundation it is built, it must be the solemn repeated declarations of the word of God, that the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son is accepted in his sight, as a complete atonement for the sins of those who believe on his name; and that it shall be imputed to them in its incomparable efficacy, to save them from deserved wrath. And declarations of this purport are (blessed be God for his abounding grace) many in number: to select a few of the most striking ones, relating to the vicarious death and sacrifice of Jesus, will be sufficient.

Isaiah, in his most affecting detail of this great event, after having expressly affirmed that Jesus suffered as a surety and substitute for us, "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquity; that it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief," in order that by bearing the tremendous curse in his own body, it might pass over the heads of the faithful, thus magnificently declares the efficacy of his sacrifice: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities," that is, bear them as the scape-goat did, carrying them away into the pathless inaccessible wilderness, so that they shall not be found when sought for by the malicious tempter.

In another place we are informed by the angel Gabriel, commissioned to revive the heart of the greatly beloved Daniel; that when "Messiah the prince was cut off," in that oblation of himself on the cross, he accomplished a work suitable to his own infinite glory; "He finished the transgression," by an expiation of it, and by redeeming all who should believe in him from its curse. "He made an end of sin," by delivering from its detestable dominion all who should flee to him for succor. "He made reconciliation for iniquity," by bringing the faithful to possess peace with God, and by replacing them in his forfeited favor. "He brought in everlasting righteousness," a righteousness whose virtue will continue to justify all that believe throughout all ages; and with which eternal life stands connected by the promise of God.

These glorious effects of the Redeemer's sacrifice were perfectly known to the innumerable millions of the heavenly host; therefore, so soon as Jesus appeared in our flesh, they filled the air with their presence, breaking forth into this congratulatory song of praise (the same in import with Gabriel's message to the beloved Daniel,) "Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace, good-will towards men."

To the testimony of prophets and angels, the immediate voice of God from heaven must be joined: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It is he, who by his life and death magnifies my law, restores my ruined creatures to life and happiness, and accomplishes a work of all others most pleasing in my sight.

The same strong attestations does the Redeemer himself give to the efficacy of his atoning death.—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son (gave him up, to suffer on the cross,) to the end that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life." In another discourse

he declares, "He gave his flesh for the life of the world;" and just before his departure, that "he shed his blood for the remission of the sins of many."

Consider and weigh well the force of all these testimonies, and you will be constrained to say, that nothing more could have been done to engage those who feel the guilt and misery of their sins, to place their whole dependence on Jesus Christ for pardon. It is not now possible for a penitent sinner to make a single objection which is not evidently answered. With equal propriety and mercy therefore is this call addressed to sinners of every denomination, who feel their misery and are athirst for pardon.—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." It was my body which bore your sins on the tree, when I suffered "the just for the unjust." It was my blood which was shed by the sword of Justice, when I stood in your stead. It was I, who being "the brightness of my Father's glory, and the express image of his person," and "upholding all things by the word of my power, purged away your sins by the sacrifice of myself," and "then sat down" your Mediator "on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" believe therefore on me, and you shall receive remission of sins.

Remission of sins, however, though a blessing most necessary to man, extends but to a part of his wants. As Adam's first disobedience sprung from his impious desire to be like God in knowledge, so the just punishment of his sin was the extinction of all divine light in his soul. Hence we, his fallen offspring, are born blind to God, and the things of God; though the knowledge of them is far preferable than life. Hence we are liable to perpetual delusion and prejudice against the truth.

For our relief, therefore, in this case, we are commanded by God to depend on the Lord Jesus for instruction and spiritual knowledge. If you ask on what ground you may build such dependence, and what there is in Christ Jesus to assure you of success? the answer which the divine record returns, is fully satisfactory. God proclaims in the Old Testament, that he has given his Son "for a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison-house." Isa. xlii. 6, 7. By the prophet Malachi he gives him a name most emphatically significant of his power to communicate knowledge. He calls him the "Sun of righteousness," to assure us, that as the sun in the firmament dispenses its invigorating influence through all parts of the earth, unveils the face of every object in the visible creation, and discovers it in its true aspect; so the Redeemer, by his word and Spirit, disperses the gross darkness of the human mind, makes divine truth visible and intelligible, and strengthens our dim faculties to behold the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God.—The same representation of the office of Jesus as a teacher, is again repeated by Zacharias, when, full of the Holy Ghost, he celebrates Christ's coming into the world in the gracious character of an instructor of those who were lying in gross darkness. He exalts our opinions of Jesus as "the day-spring from on high, who, through the tender mercy of our God," came "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace," Luke i. 79. Attestations of the same truth are frequent in the Scriptures.—The beloved disciple, who lay in Jesus' bosom, expresses his ability to inform and teach us, by calling him the "Word;" by pointing him out as "the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" in other words, as that matchless person, from whose word and Spirit proceeds all the divine knowledge which ever was, or shall be found amongst the children of men. To add confirmation

to these testimonies, the Redeemer bears record of himself in expressions of the same kind, and of the strongest import: "I Jesus," says he, "am the bright and morning star;" chasing the darkness of sin and error from the mind, as that star ushers in the brightness of the day. Rev. xxii. 16. In a discourse with the Jews, who were endeavoring to ensnare him by subtlety, Jesus said; "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii. 12. Is not this to assure us in the fullest manner, that he came to direct sinners in the way of salvation by his word and Spirit, and that in consequence of this his office, whoever depends for teaching and guidance upon him, shall not continue in ignorance and error, but shall have the saving light of truth surrounding his path, and making the way plain before him, from earth to heaven, from peace to glory.

To these testimonies I shall only add what St. Paul was inspired to teach us upon the same subject. He declares that "Christ Jesus is made of God unto us," not only "righteousness and sanctification," but "wisdom;" because, through him, as a teacher sent from God, we may know all things necessary for our pardon, comfort, and salvation. 1 Cor. i. 30. In another place, that divine illumination which the church receives from Christ Jesus the Lord, and the clear discoveries of God's glorious being and perfections, is thus emphatically expressed: "God who caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "In Christ," he saith again, as proposed and manifested to us in the gospel, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" in him they are covered under the veil of his humanity and deep humiliation. Observe the fulness of the expression; the apostle does not say *treasure* in the singular number, though this must have implied both the excellency and abundance of that knowledge, but *treasures*. He doth not say *many treasures*, though this would have greatly enlarged our conceptions; but he saith, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Nothing pertaining to spiritual life and godliness can be imagined, nothing in the least degree profitable for a poor, weak, helpless, sinful creature to know, which is not to be found in Christ Jesus, as an inexhaustible magazine, which the bounty of the God of glory has provided for the supply of our necessities.

Nor can it be thought that any or all of these Scriptures ascribe too much to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, when it is considered that the very end of his appearance was to manifest the name of God, and to give a complete revelation of his will and designs concerning us. Jesus not only spake the words of pure truth and righteousness, as the prophets before him, but with an infinite superiority over them all, exhibited a perfect model in his own example, both of faith and practice. And whilst other deceased prophets retain no influence to impress their words, this Prophet of the world declares, "I will send unto you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, he shall lead you into all truth: for it is written, all his children shall be taught of God."

Do you therefore painfully feel your ignorance in the things of God? Do you bewail the dulness of your intellectual faculties to apprehend spiritual objects? Are you concerned to find so much weariness in fixing your attention upon the Bible, when you behold that invaluable book? Behold your relief and remedy! Behold with joy what a foundation there is for your dependence on Jesus Christ to be taught all you need to understand! When you hear this representation of his character, that

"he left the bosom of his Father to declare him unto us;" when you hear, that for this purpose he has not only given to his church his written word, to point out the way of life; but has also promised to give it efficacy by the power of the Holy Ghost, can you wish for more? Are you grieved that you know God no better, are you athirst for instruction in righteousness? What can induce you to make application to the Lord Jesus Christ, if this encouragement from St. John fails? "We know," says he, "that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true." 1 John v. 20. He has given us not only that intellectual faculty which distinguishes us from the animal world, for this was ever common to all men; he has given us not only the external revelation which false pretenders to the faith have as well as ourselves; but he has given to us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of God: a gift confined to those alone who depend upon Jesus as the truth and the life. Are you then crying out in that humble manner which your necessitous condition requires, "O! that God would show me the secrets of wisdom:—what I know not, teach thou me." You see on whom your help is laid: you see in this case your application to Christ must be daily and persevering. It is he only who can say, "Council is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength." When blind Bartimeus cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me, that I may receive my sight," they that stood by said, "Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee." Mark x. 49. The same compassionate call is addressed to you from Jesus enthroned in glory. "I counsel thee," says he to every one in whose mind darkness and ignorance prevail, "to anoint thee with eye-salve," that is, to apply to my word and Spirit, "that thou mayest see;" that thy understanding may be enlightened, that thou mayest be filled with the knowledge of God, and have a right judgment in all things.

Further; as you stand in need of wisdom and teaching, that you may know the truth of God, so you in the same degree want light to discover and baffle the devices of the devil. To whom then shall you go to obtain such light but unto Jesus, before whom we are assured all things are open and naked, even the deepest counsels of the destroyer, and all his snares of cruelty? Jesus knows how, with equal ease and certainty, to confound his numberless contrivances, and infatuate even the spirit of all subtlety and malice. For this reason the very first name given to the Redeemer was that of the bruiser of the serpent's head. He is the glorious deliverer, who came to ruin Satan's schemes, and disappoint his contrivances to hurt and destroy the faithful.—Hence it must follow, that Jesus knows how to deliver the godly out of every temptation, and to preserve them unto his own kingdom. Who then, if not this all-sufficient Person, is worthy to be relied on with unshaken confidence, by the children of ignorance and blindness?

#### SUNDAY XIV.—CHAP. XIV.

THE FOUNDATION OF DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST, FOR VICTORY OVER SIN.

WE have considered the fulness of help which is laid up in Christ for man, as subject to the curse of the law and blindness of understanding; but a further exertion of divine power is absolutely necessary to make him partaker of complete salvation. Man is naturally a slave to earthly, sensual, and devilish tempers. Covetousness or lewdness, envy or pride, command on his heart as on their throne. When their dominion is manifested by shame, loss, or out-



ward vexation of mind, their natural and necessary effects, he wishes himself free; he determines, confident of his own strength, no more to be overcome. But, behold! the very next temptation adapted to stir up the evil which is in him, as easily prevails as the former did; so that soon disheartened by such repeated foils, and ashamed to confess his own villainess, he gives up the important contest, and begins to palliate that ignominious slavery, from which he knows not how to be delivered.

Now observation concurs with Scripture to prove, that superiority of wit, or an extraordinary share of natural abilities, though even improved by the advantages of polite education, do not enable men to stand before the power of their corrupted nature any more than savage ignorance: they can only gild those shackles which they cannot burst asunder, and slightly conceal from the stranger's superficial eye what still defiles and galls the inner man.

This spiritual bondage must always become exceeding grievous to endure, wherever there is a right judgment of God and the nature of sin. Then will there be an earnest desire to obtain deliverance at the hands of one mighty to save from such tyrannical oppression. For this deliverance God commands us to depend on the Lord Jesus Christ. And to engage our utmost confidence, such a full display of his power is laid before us, as makes the suspicion of miscarriage to the last degree unreasonable. The ancient prophets, declaring the extent and irresistible force of his government, call him, "The Lord of Hosts, the Lord mighty in battle; whose throne is heaven, and whose foot-stool is earth; who has the light for his garment, the clouds for his chariot, the thunder for his voice, and all the legions of angels for his servants."

And lest the humiliation of the Redeemer should diminish our conceptions of his power to save, the glory he manifested in the days of his flesh is that which is most particularly related. Innumerable multitudes of the wretched and diseased crowded round his divine Person, and instantly by him they were made whole. The dumb, the deaf, the lame, the blind, the dead, were all restored by his energy upon them, to the blessing of life, or the enjoyment of their faculties. His command over the whole creation is marked in the strongest colors. For though the winds and storms are mighty, yet Jesus in his low estate only rebuked them, and they were hushed in silence. The waves of the sea raged horribly, yet at his word they sunk into a perfect calm. Death and the grave, though inexorable to and invincible by mortals, were not able for a moment to detain their prey when Jesus only spake; "Lazarus, I say unto thee, arise." The powers of darkness and the strength of hell, though mightier far than diseases, storms, or death, submit to him, and entreat his favor, as their irresistible, though offended Lord and Sovereign.

Further; for the greater encouragement of our faith and hope in Jesus, as a complete deliverer through his Spirit, from the tyranny of our sinful tempers, let it be duly pondered, that Jesus carried about with him, when on earth, examples of his saving power. Publicans, accounted the worst of men, and harlots, the worst of women; these he delivered from the captivity of their lusts, and by them proclaimed that none can be so enslaved by sin, but he can make them free indeed. And to demonstrate this most transporting truth, which he preached with his own mouth, and confirmed by numerous instances during his ministry, at the very hour of his death he still more gloriously displayed the same almighty power to destroy the dominion of sin in the utmost height of its strength. Behold Jesus hanging on the cross: his visage lacerated and mangled, his body covered with marks of scorn,

swelled with strokes of violence, bedewed from head to foot with bloody gore; behold him even in this condition exert the most astonishing act of power we or angels can conceive; hear him say to the thief, who made his prayer to him, and placed his whole dependence upon him: hear him say: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" "I will carry thee up with me into heaven, as a trophy of my victory over Satan, and will show thee there, as part of the spoils that shall adorn my triumphs over hell." He snatches this abandoned sinner from the brink of destruction, as an earnest of the full recovery of all who should ever trust in him; saves one that seemed not only void of grace, but beyond his power; and sanctifies that heart in an instant, which had probably been for a long course, wallowing in sin!

In all these victories we may conceive the Redeemer to have acted with this double view; that he might fully ascertain his title to the character of the Messiah, as described in the Old Testament; and that he might lay at the same time a sure foundation for his church to trust on the might of his holy arm, to the end of the world.

If it is said, the Redeemer's death and burial in the grave indicate his weakness; it is answered, that Jesus entered the grave, not merely as a subject, but as an invader and conqueror. He stripped the king of terrors of his dominion, and, rising on the third day, triumphed openly as the "resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall never die." The language of his resurrection was full of power; it confirmed the words of the prophet, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Isa. xxvi. 19.

But if these acts demonstrate the power of Jesus, and present him before our eyes as an object every way able to answer the dependence which we place on him for deliverance from the power of sin, how much more is the ground of this dependence strengthened by the declarations both in the Old and New Testaments, of his sufficiency for this work! Hear, how every doubt is obviated, and all despondency graciously reproofed: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." Isa. xxxv. 4. "Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him.—He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isa. xl. 10, 11. "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth," that is, shall make all his dependants finally to triumph over sin and Satan. "I have given thee," saith God the Father, "for a leader and commander of the people, to preach deliverance to the captives." By the prophet Malachi we are assured, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and purge them," that is, his faithful people, "as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." St. Peter confirms these glorious declarations by proclaiming to all the Jews, enslaved and abandoned to the practice of wickedness as they were, that God having raised up his Son Jesus, had sent him to bless them, by turning every one of them from their iniquities.

St. Paul teaches us, that the Lord Jesus Christ, in his character and capacity of Mediator, is invested with absolute dominion: that he reigns as a rightful conqueror over all his enemies; that he is a horn of salvation to those that trust in his name: that he sits on a throne of glory till all opposition to his people and himself cease, and is utterly de-

stroyed. For in this most encouraging light the exceeding greatness of his power to save is represented, when it is said, God hath "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 20—23.

Magnify then as you please, the number, and strength of temptations, the weakness of human nature, the power of confirmed ill habits, and the efforts of Satan; still, what are all these, even though united, before him "who gave himself to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works?" What, before him whose kingly office is to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and whose infinite bounty enriches the fallen soul with that holiness which makes it meet for heaven? Who, or what, are these spiritual tyrants, avarice or uncleanness, envy or malice, deceit or unbelief—by whom strengthened, and by whom abetted—that they should defy him who hath all power in heaven and in earth to save from sin?—Him from whose overflowing fulness all the angels in heaven, and all the saints whilst on earth, receive their sanctification, and the spotless purity they will share with him through all eternity? If one person, relying with humility and perseverance on the power of Jesus, should perish, unsuccored, and in his sins; how would the promises of God concerning the kingly offices of his Son be true?—How could Jesus answer the character given of him in the record of God? One of these alternatives must therefore be maintained; either, that the character and office of Jesus are misrepresented in the Scriptures; or else, that whoever puts his trust in his power to save, shall have the victory over sin. The stubbornness of his will shall be brought to yield, his evil tempers shall be subdued, and he shall be preserved blameless in spirit, soul, and body.

What has been afforded is sufficient to prove, that we have all possible encouragement to trust in Jesus the Redeemer for wisdom, righteousness, and strength. The only knowledge concerning his character which is further necessary, is of his temper and disposition towards sinners; now, as is his majesty, so is his mercy: and he is as ready as he is able, to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. On this head what stronger testimonies can the most jealous suspicion desire, than he has given to us.

What means his deep humiliation? his pleadings with careless and obstinate sinners by day, and his midnight importunities with his heavenly Father, for them? what mean his kind invitations?—"Ho! every one that thirsteth, let him come unto me and drink; whoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out!" What can be the design of these tender expressions, but to assure us of his willingness to receive with mercy those sinners, whatever they might have been in time past, who commit their souls unto him? What was it, tell me, if it was not fervent love, that made him so long endure a condition in all respects so amazingly opposite to his original glory; instead of hallelujahs from the sweet tongues of angels, to hear the blasphemous insults of men cast on himself and all his actions; instead of the perfection of joy, to endure such sufferings that his heart in the midst of his body was even like melting wax, through the intenseness of the anguish that was upon him; instead of adoration from myriads of ministering spirits, to bear

mockery and buffeting, the bloody scourge on his back, and on his face the nauseous spittle; instead of sitting on his throne, high and lifted up, with the whole host of heaven worshipping him, saying—"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory;" to hang upon a cross between two thieves, in the midst of insulting shouts and the frowns of eternal justice?

O! come hither, behold, and see if ever there was love like this! Come and hear the voice which he uttered in the height of all his sufferings, for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Hear, and if you can, doubt; if it be possible, question his willingness to save those who depend upon him; *his* willingness, I say, who prayed even for his bitterest enemies.

In the last place: we may as firmly confide in the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation as for present pardon, wisdom, righteousness, and strength. His dominion equally extends both over the world in which we dwell, and over that into which we enter after death: "Fear not," he says, "I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hades and of the grave." It is he who hath overcome him who had the power of death, that is the devil; and has made his triumphant entry before all, and for all who depend upon him! it is he who bids us trust in him, and not be afraid. Hear with what affection and endearment he comforts his apostles, and all who should ever possess like precious faith with them in his name: "I go and prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also." And in his prayer for the salvation of all who should believe in him, he saith, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."

With what well-grounded comfort then, and with what abounding hope are you warranted to trust in the Redeemer, both in life and in death. And after having exercised continual faith in him, as a Saviour from the guilt, defilement, and strength of sin, from ignorance, and from all the enemies of your soul, how reasonably at the end of life may you copy the pattern of the first martyr to the Christian truth, and beholding by faith the object that was manifested to him, without a veil, say, with your expiring breath, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

## SUNDAY XV.—CHAP. XV.

### THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THE work of man's salvation is represented in Scripture as engaging the joint agency of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. God the Father in infinite wisdom planned this amazing scheme, and provided himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering, a sacrifice to purge away sin. God the Son executed in his own person this plan, by submitting to be delivered for our offences, by rising again for our justification, and by interceding for us in heaven. God the Holy Ghost procures an effectual reception of this scheme of salvation, and sanctifies the soul for the everlasting happiness which he prepares it to enjoy.

Each of these persons, who thus co-operate in man's salvation, must of necessity be really God, because no one could execute any part of this grand scheme pertaining to the soul. Who, for instance, besides the supreme Lawgiver himself, could admit an innocent substitute to become surety for a crimi-



nal, and bear his curse? or who, beneath the dignity of God, could have merit sufficient, by suffering, to atone for offences against the majesty of heaven and earth? or to whom, besides God, doth the power greater than that of creation belong, of triumphing over our rebellious wills, and bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ?

Now, if the holy Scripture is full and clear in certifying the influence and interposition of each person in the blessed Trinity in the work of man's salvation; it must of necessity be the duty of a Christian to pay due attention to it, and to endeavor by devout meditation to impress upon his mind what God has revealed on this subject; revealed not at all to teach us *how* the Father, Son, and Spirit are three persons in one eternal Godhead, (for this it never attempts,) but to inform us of our obligations to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to teach us to live in such entire confidence in the mercy of God, and such devotedness to his service, as the knowledge of this most sublime and mysterious truth is designed to produce.

The Scripture character of God the Father has been already considered at large; and also that of God the Son, as he is proposed to us in his mediatorial office: it shall be our business therefore now to lay before you in one view, what the Scripture teaches of the *nature, person, and office* of the Holy Ghost. And may He himself, who is the Spirit of truth, give us to understand the things which belong to his glory.

*First*, With respect to the nature of the Holy Spirit, that he is God, the same in essence with the Father and the Son, is proved from Scripture in this plain and convincing manner.—All the properties of the Godhead are ascribed to him. Now by what is the distinct essence of any being determined, but by its properties? Thus he who possesses the properties peculiar to a man, is on that very account esteemed one; by consequence, he who possesses the perfections peculiar to God, must on that account be worshipped as God.

The Scripture then declares the Holy Ghost to be a *holy, eternal, infinite, almighty* Being. *Holy*, for in reference to his peculiar office of imparting holiness, and in the exclusion of all creatures, he is called "the Holy Spirit." Eph. iv. 30. *Eternal*, that is, existing before all ages no less than in them all; thus the blood of Jesus, we are told, was offered under his influence by the name of the "Eternal Spirit." A title this, which is never ascribed to any but God himself; for though angels have existed so many ages before our world, and will never cease to be, yet we no where read of an eternal angel.—*Infinite*, for he "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. 15. *Aldmighty*, because at the creation of the world "the Spirit," we are assured, "moved upon the waters;" by his operation and influence on the chaos he formed it into order and beauty; and from his energy the world is as it were created anew day by day: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth." Psalm civ. 30.

In the dispensations of grace also the almighty power of the Holy Ghost is no less conspicuous than in the sphere of nature. The humanity of the Lord Jesus was formed by his overshadowing with his influence the blessed Virgin. By him Jesus was sent to preach the gospel and discharge his ministry: by him carried into the wilderness, and anointed with the oil of gladness above all kings and priests that had been or ever should be. In a word, in all that Jesus did on earth as our Mediator, he was both appointed and supported, we are expressly taught, by the Holy Ghost. And can you require a more complete proof than this of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost? Jesus, as Mediator, "had a name

given him which is above every name;" to such a high degree above every other name, that all in earth and heaven must bow their knee before him; and yet, considered as Mediator, he is still inferior to the Holy Spirit, because he was consecrated and enabled by him to discharge that very office. But since nothing in earth or in heaven is in dignity above the Mediator, but God only, it plainly follows that the Holy Spirit must be God, of one and the same essence with the Father, as the Scripture teaches, and as the Christian church has ever believed.

The Holy Ghost does works proper to God; of this nature is the renovation and sanctification of the soul. Even the conversion of those most abandoned sinners at Corinth, in the time of St. Paul, is ascribed to this divine agent: "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are cleansed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. vi. 8.

It was the Holy Ghost who endued the apostles with their miraculous powers, laid the foundation of the Christian church, and published its laws.—He separated Paul and Barnabas, and "appointed their mission," which is the prerogative of the supreme Director. A dispensation of such infinite moment belongs properly to God, and of all others, is apparently the least communicable to a creature. And in the consummation of all things the Spirit will work a work altogether divine, the master-piece of all he has done. It will be a full demonstration of his power, to a degree which can belong to none but God. He will bring back the bodies of the faithful from the dust, and clothe them with glory and immortality: for "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii. 11.

*Secondly*, The Holy Spirit must be the same in essence with the Father and the Son, "because the honor and worship due only to the true God are given to him." This worship and glory, of which God declares himself to be jealous, and which he will not give to another, consists in swearing by him, and in making appeals to him, touching the sincerity of what we affirm: according to that command which God has himself given in this matter, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and swear by his name." It consists also in making him the only object of our faith, hope, and obedience: for, "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." Jer. xvii. 5. God only is to be regarded as the fountain of benediction and grace; he alone is to be implored for the continuance of both; he is to be supremely obeyed as the only one whom we must fear to offend. The principal end of divine worship is thus to ascribe unto God the honor due unto his name. But we meet with instances in Holy Scripture where all these particular acts of adoration are paid to the Holy Ghost. Thus St. Paul swears by him, and appeals to him as a witness of the sincerity of his good will towards his brethren the Jews; "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." Thus the Spirit is proposed as the object of our faith, hope, and obedience, equally with the Father and the Son. For when we are baptized into each of their names, what is the import of this devout dedication, but that we entirely surrender ourselves in faith and obedience to this sacred Trinity. He is implored also, together with the Father and the Son, as the fountain and author of all the blessings and graces of the gospel. The church of Christ, from the beginning, has ever concluded her public

and solemn worship of God with this prayer, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all." We are commanded to dread offending him; we are assured, that whoever blasphemeth his honor is accounted guilty of a crime of the deepest dye: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt. xii. 31, 32.

*Thirdly,* The same infinite glory which is ascribed to God, and the same self-abasement of men and angels which is exercised under a sense of his immediate presence, are ascribed also to the Holy Ghost, and exercised before his adorable presence; and therefore he must be God. Can you find any description of the glory of God more grand and striking than the vision of Isaiah, related in the sixth chapter? The prophet "saw the Lord," we are told, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." I shall not here insist upon the repetition of the epithet *holy* three times, to prove that the angels were paying adoration to the Trinity in Unity; it sufficiently appears from the inspired declarations of the apostles. As to God the Father, none dispute that the worship might be justly addressed to him; with respect to the Son, our Lord directly avows that Isaiah spake these things when he saw *his* glory: that the Spirit was comprehended in this object of the adoration of heaven, is evident from hence; that the Lord of Hosts, which at this very time spake to him, is expressly declared by St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 25. to have been the Holy Spirit himself; "Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand," &c.

*Fourthly,* The Spirit is exalted above the rank of creatures; he must therefore be God, since there is no middle state betwixt the Creator and the creature. And that he is exalted above the rank of creatures is evident; because he is never spoken of or represented as a worshipper of God. The relation of all creatures to God, and their dependence upon him, are necessary obligations, binding them to do him homage. And the more excellent their endowments are, and the higher their obligations rise, the more prompt and active will they be in ascribing to God the honor due unto him. Accordingly the Scripture frequently represents the whole creation by a figure, and angels and men, in a proper sense, as employed in ceaseless praises and adorations of God. But whence comes it, if the Spirit also is a creature, that no mention is made of him by the sacred writers as a worshipper of God? Is it not strange, indeed, that these inspired men should have forgot that Spirit, which, if he is a creature, should have led this concert of praise, and been the principal person in it? Was it not highly needful to make mention of Him, in order to prevent error and idolatrous worship? The total silence therefore of the oracles of God on this important matter, is a strong evidence, that the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus Christ, considered not the Holy Ghost as a creature, but as God with the Father and the Son.

*Fifthly,* Lest it should be said, the Spirit "is no

more than a quality in God," which cannot subsist or be distinguished as a person in the Godhead, he has a name given to him, significant at once both of his essence and energy. The term *Holy Spirit* implies both that his essence is spiritual, and also that in the dispensation of grace it is his energy which produces holiness in the soul. Now as the spirit within a man, by which he observes his own thoughts, is not a quality, but something really distinct from his body and from his thoughts; so this Spirit which knows the thoughts of God, which even "searches the deep things of God," must be a person distinct from the Father, who is thus known by him.

He has all personal actions also ascribed to him; "He shall not speak of himself, but what he has heard that shall he speak;" He rejoices and is grieved; He approves and condemns; He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. And when Peter was still doubtful of the import of the heavenly vision which he had seen, "The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee." Acts x. 19. But all these must pass for expressions without any signification, unless they are allowed to mark out the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost.

Thus it appears from this summary view of the Scripture evidence, that the Holy Ghost is possessed of the essential attributes of God, that he does the works proper to God; that he receives the honor due unto God alone: that he stands exalted above the rank of creatures. Shall it then be said, after all this proof, that he is not by nature God with the Father and the Son? By no means. These Scripture evidences, considered each apart, conclude forcibly for the glory and Godhead of the Holy Ghost, and, united together, admit of no reply, but such evails as pride and infidelity are never at a loss to make against the plainest truths. They are fully sufficient to confirm our faith in the article of the glory and Godhead of the Holy Ghost. And as to those who will contradict and blaspheme, on account of the difficulties which occur in explaining this subject, it must be observed that all the peculiar doctrines of revelation, as well as this, become to such, matter of dispute first, and then are rejected because incomprehensible; till at length God's blessed system of truth, which none of the wise men of this world knew, is reduced to nothing more than those maxims of morality which the philosophers of old delivered without the help of revelation; and which the Deists now oppose to it, as a sufficient guide to duty and happiness. But whether this be rationally to interpret Scripture, or covertly to renounce subjection to the book of God, judge ye!

## SUNDAY XVI.—CHAP. XVI.

### THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is not enough that our judgment should be fully informed concerning the personal glory and divinity of the Holy Ghost: a Christian must also know to what great purposes that infinite, almighty, eternal Spirit, exercises his office in the church of Christ; and in what way his influences are exerted. For unless we have a clear and distinct knowledge of this, we can never ascribe to the Holy Ghost the glory of his own work in our souls on the one hand; nor, on the other, be secured from dangerous delusion, and from mistaking some creature of a brain-sick imagination for the work of the Spirit of God. Both these evils will be happily prevented by firmly adhering to our infallible guide the Scripture; which is not more full in declaring the divinity of the Holy Ghost, than in determining pre-



cisely, the nature and the effects of his inestimable influence.

To him, we are taught, is intrusted the arduous work of managing the cause of God and Christ against a sinful world, and of making it triumphant over all opposition, in that measure which seems best to unerring wisdom. By the secret yet mighty energy of the Holy Ghost, the foundation of Christian religion is laid in the soul of the believer; by him maintained, and at length completed. The foundation of Christian religion, as the term imports, is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sincere love to his person. Till this knowledge and this love possess your soul, though you may do many things which are commanded by God, and seem by profession a Christian, you still want the root of all acceptable obedience in your heart; according to that express declaration from Christ, "If any man serve me, him will my father honor." John xii. 26. which intimates that he will honor no one beside. But if you consider the account given in Scripture of the condition the world was in when the name of Jesus was first preached in it, or of the natural blindness of man in all ages to the truths of God, you will acknowledge that wherever the glory of Jesus is worthily apprehended and effectually imprinted, it must be owing to the interposition of the Holy Ghost, and his influence on the mind.

That true and worthy acceptations of the Redeemer, that lively and lasting impressions of his excellency, were owing to the Holy Ghost, when men were first called Christians, no one can doubt. At that time to entertain becoming thoughts and to feel suitable impressions of the Redeemer's glory, was directly contrary to the united force of inveterate prejudice, corrupt education, and every view of worldly interest. For the illustration of this point, suppose yourself an inhabitant either of Jerusalem or of Rome, at the time when Christ was first preached; when Pharisaism or Sadducism reigned throughout the one; and the most impure idolatry, propagated from age to age, triumphed in the other: suppose, that in this situation you had heard an apostle of the Lord call aloud upon you, commanding you in the name of God to confess the sinfulness of your sin, and to flee for refuge from deserved wrath to Jesus Christ; that this apostle, instead of concealing the meanness and weakness in which Jesus Christ lived, the shame and pain in which he died, told you that on his cross he made atonement for sin, bought you with the price of his blood, that you might live in subjection to him as your sovereign Lord; that he possessed irresistible power to save or to destroy, and unsearchable riches to reward and bless his faithful people; suppose that he concluded with a most solemn asseveration, that if you refused the call you heard, and was not united to this man Christ Jesus, as your only Saviour, you must feel indignation and wrath from God for evermore. Instantly upon such a declaration your hearts tell you, that in the circumstances above described, bitter and disdainful prejudice would have shown itself against the messenger.—The life of Jesus, infamous through innumerable slanders, his death ignominious, in your apprehension, to the last degree, would have made you treat the report as the most palpable lie ever forged to deceive. Accustomed from childhood to worship either false gods, or to trust the true God without a Mediator, a sacred horror must have chilled your blood upon hearing your idols blasphemed, or Jesus glorified as one with God; whilst every desire remaining in your soul, of esteem with men, of sinful pleasure, or of happiness from the world, must have inflamed your rage against a doctrine, which, if received, was sure, like a pestilential wind, to

blast them altogether.—To penetrate through such a cloud of darkness, what is the light of reason? to balance against such bitter prejudice, what the force of moral persuasion? To make such a sacrifice of wealth, of ease, of character, and become as it were the outscouring of all things, even to be deemed a curse upon the earth that bears you, what the power of human resolution? Yet all this sacrifice was understood and considered; it was a certain consequence evident before the eyes of all that joined themselves unto the Lord Jesus Christ; who, on account of the odium cast upon his name in every place where the gospel first came, is styled, "He whom the nation abhorreth."

Not only to counteract, but entirely to vanquish this deep rooted enmity against the Redeemer, the gospel is to be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The apostles first were to receive power, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them. Thus armed, they were to be witnesses unto Jesus, that is, of the redemption that is in him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. This eternal and almighty Spirit, by imparting to them miraculous gifts, bore down the opposition of prejudice, of education, and of worldly interest; and exerting his gracious influence on the mind at the time he was appealing by miracles to the evidence of sense, he made the glory of the Lord appear with such transcendent brightness, that thousands were added to his church, and ready to suffer death for his name's sake.

Thus in an outward and visible manner the Holy Ghost fulfilled the Redeemer's promise, whilst he laid the foundation of true faith in the soul of every one that believed. In this manner he testified of Jesus: he glorified him. In this manner he reformed the world of *sin*, in their contemptuous refusal to believe in Jesus as the only Saviour; of *righteousness* in the person and cause of Christ, since God had borne such testimony to him; of the excellency of that righteousness he accomplished, living and dying in obedience to the law of God; and of the necessity of it, as imputed to believers for their complete justification. He convinced the world of *judgment*, in giving them to behold with their own eyes, the throne of Satan cast down; his collusive oracles silenced, his temples deserted, abhorred, and thousands upon thousands of his miserable captives set at liberty.

This great effect must not be supposed to have been produced by the mere display of miracles to the senses: it evidently discovered a positive influence exercised upon the mind. This is exemplified in the prayer of the great apostle for the church at Ephesus. By the miracles wrought before them, they were so far impressed with a knowledge of the truth of the gospel, as highly to esteem the much despised, much persecuted name of its ever-blessed Author. Nevertheless, the apostle makes a clear distinction between this effect, flowing from the evidence of the miracles which were wrought in attestation of the gospel, and the internal gracious influence of the Holy Ghost on the mind. He prays therefore that God would grant unto them the grace of his Spirit, that "the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what was the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance

\* The unlearned reader is to be informed, that all the primitive apologists for our most holy faith, take notice of the charge brought against the Christians, as the procuring cause of all the public calamities inflicted on the Pagans; and that these, in their blind and cruel superstition, thought they did their gods service by putting them to death.

in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of his power towards us that believe." This goes much deeper than the force of miracles alone could reach. It implies a transforming knowledge of those sublime truths which miracles alone can never produce, and a happy experience of the certainty of the words of truth from their vital operation within.

It is evident, then, that it was the power of the Holy Ghost which produced conviction and faith in the minds of those who heard the gospel preached by the apostles, and which laid the foundation of the primitive church. But it may be said, "There does not exist in the present day the same necessity for his agency. The circumstances of the Christian world are quite different. Now, instead of blasphemous insults offered to the name of Jesus, he is adored as God in the daily service of our established church. Instead of bitter prejudices of education being generally entertained against his death as a sacrifice for our sins, we are pledged by baptism in our earliest infancy to receive it as our dearest hope. Instead of suffering persecution from our relations, because we profess ourselves the disciples of Christ, we should give offence to them were we not to do so. This alteration in the state of the world has therefore removed the necessity which before existed for the agency of the Holy Ghost. We accordingly no longer see a single miracle wrought in confirmation of the truth of the gospel, now that its own establishment, the most convincing of all miracles, has taken place." Thus, because the extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost have ceased, the necessity and efficacy of his influence at present is absolutely denied by some, and received with doubt and suspicion by many; and all that has been so plainly inculcated in Scripture of his teaching, his strength, and his comforts, has been injuriously restrained to former ages. A mistake this, destructive of all real religion: a mistake proceeding from an utter ignorance or impious disbelief of the natural blindness of man to the truths of God, and of his aversion to receive them with an obedient heart. For if the Scripture account of the blindness of the human understanding and the depravity of the heart is received, it must follow that man of himself cannot receive and come into subjection to the truth of God, though the rage of Jews and Gentiles were supposed to be entirely removed, and the truth of the gospel revelation were allowed. The natural man, the man who acts only upon the principles of natural reason, and seeks no illumination in his understanding from the Holy Ghost, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14, in their divine truth, excellence, and glory, they can be discovered by none who are not enlightened by the Spirit of God. It follows from this declaration, that a true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of salvation by him, must be the production of the Holy Ghost as much at this very hour, as when the apostles first planted churches in the name of Jesus. The Holy Ghost must "take of the things which are Christ's," and, by his powerful effectual teaching, "show them unto us." Otherwise the Redeemer will never be exalted and extolled, nor receive any heartfelt adoration for all his kindness towards us. What was the work of the Holy Ghost immediately after our Lord's ascension, is still his work with every one that believes to the saving of his soul; the exhibition of the external miracles which accompanied it in old time, only excepted.

The proof of this assertion, so much questioned now, and so often vilified as enthusiasm, I shall endeavor to evince from that most instructive text on

this subject, which has been already considered in its primary sense, and as it related to the apostolic age.

"When the Comforter is come, he will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me." The sin of overlooking the Son of God, so as to exercise no dependence on him for righteousness and strength, is not perceived by man till renewed by the Holy Ghost, though he may acknowledge the truth of the Christian creed. Deceit and fraud, envy and malice, with the crimes destructive to society, are generally reprobated, and their evil is manifest. But the great sin of entertaining such thoughts of ourselves and of our own virtues, as do in fact render all the names of honor we give unto Christ merely titular: this sin, most injurious to the perfections of God, you never see in the catalogue which unenlightened man draws up against himself. He can approach the holy, the jealous God in prayer, without fear or suspicion of his displeasure, though he never committed his cause to the appointed Mediator, nor laid his sacrifice upon that altar, which alone can sanctify it in the sight of God.

To reprove for this sin in particular, is the work of the Holy Ghost. He it is who must open your eyes, if they are ever opened, to see your own sinfulness, and to loathe yourself before your Maker, for the mean thoughts, the grovelling apprehensions, which notwithstanding the declarations of the Bible, and your pretended belief of it, you have had concerning the Lord's Christ, the Rock of ages, the Beloved of the Father. It is by the Holy Ghost you must be enabled to say, with a firm reliance on him, that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." By his influence it is, that you will ever so behold the Saviour as to believe in your heart, and to confess with your mouth, "that if any man love him not, that man is anathema, maranatha," accursed of God; and unless he repents of this great wickedness, sure to be condemned by the Lord when he cometh to judge the world. And when the sin of not depending on Jesus, and not honoring him as the Father is honored, is thus clearly perceived and heartily detested; it is not flesh and blood which have made this revelation, no; nor barely the written word of God; (for long after *that* was allowed by you to be the truth, no such effect followed,) but it is owing to the Spirit of truth, who has communicated to you this most precious knowledge.

Again, "When the Comforter is come," saith our Lord, "he shall reprove the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father." To be received into favor with God, by virtue of what another has done; and to confess that the life and death of Jesus are of such efficacy as to bring down blessing and salvation on every sincere dependent upon him for righteousness, is a mystery offensive to the haughty spirit of man in its natural state. Still, if left to ourselves, though the Bible is in our hands, though we profess a sacred regard for its dictates, we shall go about to establish our own righteousness; we shall stand upon our own personal worth before God, as the foundation of our eternal hopes. Under the accusations of conscience, we shall have recourse to our own frailty and the strength of temptation, as our advocates; to our repentance and amendment, as our propitiation. For so inveterately, through the corruption of our natures, are we prepossessed in favor of our own virtues, and even of our feeblest attempts to be virtuous, that we can be as confident, as if we were as holy as the law of God requires us to be.

It is the work of the Holy Ghost to reprove the world for this self-exalting lie: for this hateful overrating our poor tainted performances, our much



blemished obedience. The eternal Spirit only can overthrow such vain confidence, and can establish a persuasion in the mind directly opposite to it; namely, that "Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;" that in consequence of this, we are always accepted, even after our highest possible advancement in holiness on earth, not for our own sake, but for the sake of Christ; and that his access to the Father, in the character of Mediator, is all our hope; that though unfeigned repentance, sincere love to God, and universal obedience to his commandments, are and must be our vouchers that we belong to Christ; yet, neither singly nor altogether do they make reconciliation for the least of our sins; that Jesus alone accomplished a work, impossible to any creature, too mighty even for angels to attempt, when he bled on the cross, and cried out, "It is finished."

But till the Holy Ghost convinces us of the necessity and glory of this righteousness, it is an offensive subject. Such exaltation of the Saviour's obedience and death will be construed into a disparagement of personal virtue. The search after the gift of justification unto eternal life, freely through the redemption that is in Jesus, will be deemed a contempt of good works. The Spirit of truth must exert his gracious influence to remove this natural blindness, and master this stubborn prejudice; and then, that merit which Jesus ever lives to plead before the Father for the church, purchased by his own blood, will be all your salvation and all your desire.

In one instance more, the text under consideration declares the work and influence of the Holy Ghost: "He shall reprove the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged;" that is, he shall convince men of the complete victory which Jesus has obtained over sin, the world, and Satan, in order to make all who believe in him happy partakers of the same.

Subjection to sin, although the vilest servitude and basest vassalage, is too often earnestly contended for. Every man in the world, it is said, has his foible; that is, in the language of politeness, some sin, or evil temper, that enslaves its unresisting victim. Like the dastardly unbelieving spies sent into the land of Canaan, men magnify to an enormous size the force of temptation, and the weakness of the flesh, forgetting the power of God, and then say, Who can stand before these?

The Holy Ghost, who is the grand agent for the glory of Christ, convinces us that we err in this matter, not considering the power of the Redeemer.—It is his office to assure the heart that "the prince of this world is judged," already dethroned, and vanquished by Jesus: to persuade us that the working of his Spirit, "which worketh mightily in them that believe," is infinitely stronger than the combined force of all outward opposition, and of all inward corruption: to demonstrate to us, that if we are doing what is forbidden, if we are enslaved by pride or discontent, intemperance or uncleanness, covetousness or envy, it is, because we will not in earnest seek deliverance from such hateful tyrants.

In this manner, as in the apostle's days, the Holy Ghost continually operates on the mind of every one that believes in Jesus now, as then; "A man cannot enter into the kingdom of grace except he be first born of water and of the Spirit."

And whilst the Holy Ghost testifies of Christ, and glorifies him in his person and undertakings, his influence, we must observe, is a thing quite distinct from those means by which it is conveyed; so that whatever proper convictions of the Redeemer's person and salvation are cordially received, it is not to the means, but to the Spirit working by them, that we must attribute the enlightening and renewing of

the mind. This important doctrine is repeated again and again in Scripture, and must therefore never be overlooked by us. Thus it is written of the degenerate idolatrous Israelites, "Hear ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Isa. vi. 9, 10. Here is the outward call of the word, on the one hand, but on the other a refusal of the inward and spiritual grace, on account of their insupportable provocations. The alarming expressions, "Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes," cannot possibly mean that God actually inspired Israel with contempt for his holy word, or disaffection towards it: but they mean that such hardness of heart and disaffection must always follow, where the Spirit of grace is withdrawn; because he alone opens the eyes of the understanding, and unstops the ears which are deaf to the words of God's book. In confirmation of the same truth, it is recorded, that God "opened the heart of Lydia, to attend to the things spoken by St. Paul." In this instance you very distinctly mark the inspired preacher on the one hand, declaring the whole counsel of God, and offering the knowledge of all that is externally needful to the conversion of the soul: and on the other you observe the God of all grace exercising his blessed and powerful influence, by which the apostle's discourse was successful, and attained the end for which it was delivered. And lest these declarations should be considered as extraordinary, St. Paul teaches us *generally* to distinguish between the means and instruments, and the grace of the Holy Spirit from whom all their beneficial effects proceed. He puts this interrogation; "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers, by whom ye believed as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. Mark here, how totally distinct from each other are the means of grace, and the eternal Spirit to which they owe their efficacy. Of course we must allow that the foundation of the Christian religion is laid by the power of the Holy Ghost in every believer, and that his work and influence are at this hour as real and successful with the faithful, as they were when signs and wonders were done by him through the hands of the apostles.

From what has been offered, we may understand clearly the permanent work and internal operation of the Holy Ghost, and know whether we are the happy subjects of his influence ourselves, by considering what impressions the word of truth has made upon our minds.

But besides this, the Scripture teaches us to look upon the Holy Ghost, as the author of the sanctification, which is wrought in the hearts, and appears in the lives of believers; and that by this sanctification, his indwelling presence and effectual working may be known with the greatest certainty and preciseness. If you feel a sincere love to God for sending his Son into the world as the propitiation for sin, this love is no more the natural growth of your heart, or acquired simply by your own reflections and contemplations, than the beneficial grain which enriches our fields is spontaneously produced without seed or culture. "It is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you." If the effect of this love is joy, or that delightful sensation, which results from the consideration of great good obtained or expected from the God of your salvation; this sensation, in honor of its divine gracious Author, is called "joy in the Holy Ghost." If you possess an internal settled tranquillity, whilst God and eternal judgments are in your thoughts, through

Jesus Christ, "by whom you have received the atonement," in the place of that guilty uneasiness or stupid insensibility which you showed before, at the mention of such awful subjects; the marvellous change claims a divine parent, and is expressly declared to be the "fruit of the Spirit." If possessing in your heart the heavenly treasure of love, peace, and joy, you are patient under repeated injuries, gentle under exasperating provocations, kind according to your ability, meek so as to evidence the humble opinion you entertain of yourself, the good will you feel towards all men; this union of amiable tempers cometh from above. It is the image and superscription of one sanctified by the Spirit and expressly said to be "his fruit." There is not a duty we are called to perform, not an evil temper we are required to vanquish, but we are directed in Scripture to seek for the aid of the Spirit of God, that our endeavors may be crowned with success.—We are taught that he "helps our infirmities in prayer;" that on this account he is called the "Spirit of grace and supplication." We are commanded to "pray in the Holy Ghost;" which plainly implies, that as in prayer we must seek his sanctifying grace in order to do all other duties, so must we acknowledge and depend upon his assistance for the right discharge of the duty of prayer itself. This is plainly marked in the Scripture account of the acceptance of our holy duties. It teaches us, that all true Christians "have access to the Father through the Mediator by one Spirit." Eph. iii. 18. So in discharging the duties of praise, when Christians are exhorted to be much employed in the praises of God, they are exhorted to be "filled with the Holy Ghost." And this operative influence of the Holy Ghost is not spoken of merely as a privilege which God promises, but a duty which he requires. From whence it is evident, that without him all our services will want the very soul which should animate them, and be as a maimed sacrifice. In a word, it is to denote the never-ceasing influence and operation of the Holy Ghost on the hearts of all the faithful in Christ Jesus, that their life is expressed in these terms, a *being*, a *walking*, and *living in the Spirit*.

## SUNDAY XVII.—CHAP. XVII.

### THE PROPERTIES OF THE SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE.

We have already discoursed upon the personality and nature of the Holy Spirit; we have also endeavored to learn from Scripture what purposes his influence is designed to effect. It remains now that we should explain, in order to prevent enthusiasm, the properties of his operation, and that we should also expose the impious, though too prevalent error, of denying the reality of his agency upon the hearts of them that believe.

*First*, then, This influence of the Holy Ghost is secret, discernible only by its fruits. The Spirit is not to be understood as using violence or constraint on man, but as acting in a way similar to what we observe in the established course of nature. Accordingly, the prophets, the apostles, and the Son of God, refer us to the growth of the vegetable world for the illustration of the Spirit's influence. As the juices of the earth are first received into the root, from whence they gradually ascend the trunk, and thence are diffused to the branches, producing blossoms and fruits to the admiration of every spectator, though the most penetrating eye cannot discern how—so it is with the agency of the Spirit.—The life of holiness in the soul of one born of the Spirit appears in his actions, discourse, desires, affections, and most secret thoughts. Every one that diligently observes him can perceive the excellent

fruits of this life; but the Author of it is invisible, and the method by which it has been produced and maintained is incomprehensible.

*Secondly*, Though the Spirit's influence is secret, silent, and not to be observed but by its fruits, it is not on that account less powerful in the effects produced. The new creature in Christ Jesus is born to conflict, toil, and labor. Born for fight and intended for victory; but not at present formed to enjoy so much as to act. A power, therefore, proportioned to the difficulties with which a Christian has to struggle, and to the enemies with whom he has to contend, must be continually supplied. And this is granted; "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world;" the love of its pleasures cannot corrupt him, nor the fear of its frowns dismay him; he marches on in the strength of God, and will not be turned out of the path of his duty. But the influence by which such a victory is maintained, must be full of energy; and those who stand in this condition, must be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

*Thirdly*, The influence of the Holy Ghost is always exactly correspondent to the written word, and preserved and increased in the use of the means of grace. He makes no new revelations; but gives success and efficacy to what is already revealed.—He accomplishes no other change in the habits, sentiments, and feelings of the soul, than what the sacred oracles point out, and such as to unprejudiced reason must appear excellent and desirable. He works by means apt and suitable in themselves for the maintenance and increase of holiness, though his influence is entirely distinct in itself from those means. As the life of the body, though upheld by a divine power from moment to moment, is not maintained miraculously, but in the use of food, rest, and sleep: so the soul of the regenerate, that walks in the Spirit, and lives in the Spirit, "desires the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby;" he prays and watches; and by the use of his enlightened sanctified reason, he avoids what would endanger his soul, and chooses that by which it can be profited.

*Fourthly*, The influence of the Holy Ghost "is various in the degrees of its communication and operation." All who are the blessed partakers of the Holy Ghost, not only differ from others who share the same privilege, but from themselves at different seasons, in the degree of benefit they receive. Some have much more light and joy, strength and vigor, than others; and there is often a quick succession of peace and trouble, of tranquility and conflict. But this variety respecting those who are under the government of the same Spirit, is generally owing to the different degrees of watchfulness, diligence, and fidelity in the use of the talents already committed to their care. The Spirit, we are taught, is often grieved, and in a degree quenched by carelessness, neglect, and much more by a fall into some known sin. In such cases the paternal justice of God requires that proper rebukes should be given; that his children, feeling their own deadness and cheerless thoughts, may be more vigilant for the time to come, and avoid all undutiful deportment. For the same reason, in order to encourage and reward the zealous obedience of those who more carefully and faithfully adhere to God, studying to serve him with their whole hearts: the Father and Son will abundantly manifest their favor to them by the Holy Spirit, and come and make their abode with them.

We have now explained with sufficient copiousness the nature of the Holy Spirit's influence; it remains only that we should conclude this subject with a remark upon the impiety of the opinions but too fashionable in the present day, which vilify his



gracious operation as the chimera of a heated brain, and the reverie of enthusiasts. To cover the impety of such opinions, it is common to urge the bold and shameless pretences of enthusiasts to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and to appeal to our ignorance of any such influence on our own minds. Arguments these as frivolous and vain, as the opinion they are urged to justify is impious in the sight of God. For what can possibly be conceived more weak than to ridicule and explode a doctrine merely because it has been abused to purposes totally opposite to its real tendency? If there is any force in this argument, we must renounce the use of reason, no less than the belief of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. For what can be more hurtful to society, what more injurious to the honor of God and the well-being of man, than that licentiousness which many of the loudest declaimers upon the excellency of reason have recommended in her name? If the foolish jargon used by wild visionaries, who falsely lay claim to the Spirit's influence, to sanction their nonsense, cover their pride, or screen their villany or lewdness, will justify the total denial of any operation of the Spirit on the hearts of the faithful; then surely we must also allow that the execrable blasphemies uttered against God's most holy word, by those who pique themselves on being eminently rational, would vindicate the suppression of the exercise of the rational faculty; or at least would afford ground to represent it as mischievous in itself, and ever to be suspected. But does not every intelligent person in this case distinguish the use from the abuse of reason? Surely, then, reason, candor, and the authority of the Almighty, require you to judge in the same way concerning the work of the Spirit; and not to condemn the genuine offspring of the Holy Ghost, by confounding it with the base counterfeit that may in some points slightly resemble it. And whoever refuses diligently to examine by Scripture-marks and evidences, before he determines what is the work of the Spirit, it is plain that the corruption of his heart has filled him with enmity to the doctrine of the Spirit's influence; and therefore, with criminal rashness, he confounds things which are essentially different; the spirit of delusion with the Spirit of truth.

The other argument urged by many with an air of confidence against the influence of the Holy Ghost on the heart, is as frivolous; namely, "their ignorance of any such operation upon their own minds." "We experience," exclaim the careless and the proud, the gay and the voluptuous, "nothing of this kind; therefore argue as you please concerning it, we cannot believe it to be any thing more than the creature of imagination." But what palpable absurdity is this? In every other instance you would condemn it as weak reasoning. Were a man to tell you that he would never believe that there is in another any excellency superior to what he himself possesses, because he does not experience it, would you not think his stupidity too great to deserve an answer?—We do not esteem brutes capable of judging of the properties of man; nor one man, in some instances, more capable of judging of the perfections of another. Such as have exercised themselves with success in philosophical studies are conscious of pleasures in them, to which others are also true strangers. Now, should a clown, in the grossness of his ignorance and the narrowness of his understanding, scoff at the mention of such pleasures, and be confident there was no reality in them, surely it would be accounted a piece of folly too gross to need a formal confutation. But the difference between the spiritual man, and the man who apprehends no more than what his own reason can teach him, is much greater than what subsists between the most illiterate peasant, and the most

renowned philosopher. The difference between those that are born after the Spirit, and those that are born only after the flesh, is described in Scripture by these strong terms; "a passing from a state of death to life; out of darkness into marvellous light;" it implies the exercise of the faculties and affections of the mind with esteem, frequency, and delight, on what before was neglected, despised, abhorred. For men therefore to say, We will not admit there is now any operation of the Holy Ghost on the soul, because we feel not his influence on our own, is to make their knowledge the measure of all reality, the folly and fallacy of which is obvious.—They may know indeed how the case is with themselves; that there is no such thing as the work of the Holy Ghost on their hearts; no enlightening of their understanding; no change in their own affections, no desire of nearer and still nearer approach to God, no thirsting after his presence, no heavenly joy and consolation in Christ Jesus. This all men, who are destitute of repentance and faith in Jesus, may with the greatest truth affirm of themselves, for the Scripture declares it of them. But positively and confidently to assert that this must be the case with all others likewise, is to reject the essential difference on earth between the heirs of salvation and the children of the wicked one. It is impudently to deny the work of the Spirit, and the life maintained by him; though in Scripture there is a clear, full, and distinct account of this work, and of the life produced in the soul by him, of its nature and operations, its pains and enjoyments, its declensions and improvements. To deny therefore the reality of these things, is to lie against the Holy Ghost, and to prove manifestly you have no share in him. It is to lie against him; because if there is no work and operation of the Holy Ghost, then the Scriptures which holy men of old wrote through his inspiration, and which gave a particular account of his continual presence and influence with the church, are no better than a fabulous tale. And it proves that you have no share in him, since you could not speak with malicious words against that divine Agent who impresses the truth of God on the heart, unless you were yourself, alas! "earthly, sensual, having not the Spirit."

## SUNDAY XVIII.—CHAP. XVIII.

### ON THE NATURE OF TRUE REPENTANCE.

It is a truth fully revealed in Scripture, that without repentance no one can enter into life. But too often it happens that those who are convinced of this, deceive themselves by calling something by the name of repentance, which bears only a superficial, worthless resemblance of it; and then flatter themselves with the vain imagination that this base counterfeit shall be entitled to the blessings promised to the divine original.

To compare therefore, and distinguish the true repentance from the false; to show why every one, ere he can be saved, must experience the change it implies, and to discover the way to attain it, is a point of great importance. It will tend, through the blessing of God, to discover prevailing errors which lie at the root of all careless and profane living, and to awaken every reader to self-examination on this important point.

First, then, let it be observed, that false repentance flows only from a sense of danger, and a fear of impending wrath.

When the conscience of a sinner is alarmed with a sense of his dreadful guilt and danger, it must of necessity loudly remonstrate against those sins which threaten him with eternal destruction: hence those frights and terrors which are frequently found

amongst men under apprehensions of death. At such times their sins, some grosser enormities especially, convince them to their face, and all their aggravations are remembered with bitterness; conscience draws up the indictment, and importunately urges the charge against them: the law passes the sentence, and condemns them without mercy. And what have they now in prospect but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation to consume them? Now with distress they cry out and howl upon their beds for the greatness of their sin! With amazement they expect the dreadful issue of their sinful practice. How ready are they now to make resolutions of beginning a humble, watchful, holy life! In this their terror, conscience, like a flaming sword, restrains them from their former course of impiety and sensuality.

But what is this repentance more than the fear of the worm that never dieth, and of the fire that never shall be quenched? Let but conscience be pacified, and the tempest of the troubled mind allayed, and this false penitent will return with the dog to his vomit again, till some new alarm revive his convictions of sin and danger, and with them the same process of repentance. Thus too many will sin and repent, and repent and sin all their lives.

In some instances, indeed, distress of conscience makes a deeper impression, and fixes such an abiding dread of particular gross sins, that there appears a visible reformation. Yet in this case the sinner's lust may only be dammed up by his fears; and, were the dam broken down, they would immediately run again in their former channel with renewed force. It is true, this terror is often a preparative to true repentance; but if it proceeds no further, it is still a fallacious sign of safety.

Here however it is necessary to observe, that though there may be much terror and external reformation without true repentance, yet it is somewhat to be thus far affected. The greater part of true penitents have been at first under similar distress, and perhaps begun out of mere selfishness to flee from the wrath to come. Instead therefore of construing what is said against false repentance, as if all was lost because your repentance is not yet of the right kind; let it work more reasonably, and excite you to prayer, that those terrors and checks which are in themselves no certain proofs of the sincerity of your repentance, may be perfected and issue in what undoubtedly are such proofs.

False repentance then flows *merely* from a sense of danger, and a fear of impending wrath. The character of true repentance is quite opposite. Here *sin itself* becomes the greatest burden and object of aversion; sorrow springs from an affecting humbling sense of the dishonor and injury the penitent feels he has done unto God; not only from a selfish concern for his own safety, but from a regard to God, to which he was before a stranger; from a conviction that his whole deportment and the ruling tempers of his heart have been evil and desperately wicked. The language of a true Scripture penitent is such as this: "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me; mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burden; they are too heavy for me. Deliver me from all my transgressions, let not my sins have dominion over me. Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me." The true penitent mourns on account of all his lusts, and hates them all; he is not willing that any should be spared, though they were dear as a right hand, or a right eye.

How great and apparent the difference between

being struck with fear, restrained by terrors, or driven from a course of sinning by the lashes of an awakened conscience.—Between this, I say, and loathing ourselves in our own sight for all our iniquities, vehemently desiring grace and strength to conquer and mortify corruption, and to be delivered from the tyrannous rule of sin! The former is merely the sordid fruit of self-love, which compels the soul to flee from danger; the latter, the exercise of a vital principle, which separates the soul from sin, and engages the whole man in a persevering opposition against it.

*Secondly*, False repentance dishonors God, by refusing, under all its distracting fears, to trust to his mercy. It is full of unbelief, though the gospel has provided a glorious relief for every guilty, ruined sinner, and opened a blessed door of hope even for those whose sins are red as scarlet; though pardon and salvation are freely offered to every one that is weary and heavy laden with the guilt and defilement of sin; though the blood of Christ is sufficient to cleanse from all sins, however circumstanced, however aggravated they may be: the false penitent, alas! sees no safety in this refuge. The law of God challenges his obedience, and condemns his disobedience; conscience concurs both with the precept and sentence of the law. To pacify conscience, to satisfy God's justice, and to lay a foundation of future hope, he has recourse to resolutions, to promises, to attempts of new and better obedience, to penances, and to variety of self-righteous schemes. The defect of his endeavors and attainments creates new terrors; these terrors excite new endeavors; and thus the false penitent goes on, notwithstanding the greatness of his sorrow and the pain of his conviction, seeking righteousness by his own works, and afraid to trust in the mercy of God through the blood of his Son. He may, it is true, have some sort of feeble regard to Christ, so as to use his name in his prayers for pardon, though he dare not depend upon the merits of his blood, and upon the love of God manifested in him, for the remission of his sins. Yet even this regard itself is built upon the secret hope that his reformation and performances will come in aid to purchase the favor of God, which he cannot confide in as freely promised, for Christ's sake, to every humbled sinner. It is in effect a disparagement of the Redeemer, as if he knew not how to have compassion on him till he has recommended by some attainments in holiness.

Now take a view of true repentance, and you will find the character of it to be directly opposite to that mentioned above. The true penitent approaches God with a deep impression of his guilt, and of his just desert of eternal rejection: but then he comes before a mercy-seat, though he acknowledges that if God should mark iniquity, he could not stand before him; he remembers, "that with God there is forgiveness that he may be feared;" and that, "with him there is plenteous redemption."—He looks to the blood of Christ as alone efficacious to cleanse his soul, and take away the curse due to his numerous and aggravated sins; and from this, he takes encouragement to mourn before God, expressing himself in the Psalmist's language: "Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin; purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." This is the prayer which both encourages his cries for mercy, and embitters to him all his sins; that it is which makes him loathe them all, and long for deliverance from them.

"Is God infinitely merciful and ready to forgive," saith the true penitent, "and have I been so basely ungrateful as to sin against such astonishing goodness, to affront and abuse such mercy and love?—Is sin so hateful to God that he punished it in the



person of his dear Son, when he made him an atonement for sin? How vile and abominable then must I appear in the eyes of his holiness and justice, who am nothing but defilement and guilt? Has the blessed Saviour suffered the Father's wrath for my sins? Have they nailed him to the cross, and doomed him to the agonies of an accursed death; and shall I yet be reconciled to my lusts? Have I dishonored God so much already, loaded his dear Son with so many horrible indignities, and brought such a weight of guilt upon myself! and is it not now high time to divorce my most beloved lusts, those great enemies to God and my own soul?"

Here you must perceive the great difference and even contrariety, between a guilty fleeing from God, like that of Adam after his fall; and an humbling, self-condemning approach to God's pardoning mercy, like the prodigal's, when returned to his much injured father;—between slavish and proud endeavors to atone for your sins, and make your peace with God by your own righteousness: and repairing only to the blood of Christ to cleanse you from all sin;—between mourning for your guilt and danger, and mourning for your sins as the basest injury to God and Christ, to mercy and love manifested in the most endearing manner; in a word, between attempting a new life by the strength of your own resolutions and endeavors, and looking only to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for grace and strength, as well as for pardon and freedom from condemnation.

*Thirdly*, In false repentance there still remains an aversion to God and his holy law; but in true repentance there is a love for both. The distress and terror which awakened sinners feel, arise from dreadful apprehensions of God and his justice; they know that they have greatly provoked him—they are afraid of his wrath, and therefore want some covert: they might before, perhaps, have had some pleasing apprehensions of God, while they considered him as altogether mercy, and so long as they could hope for pardon, and yet live in their sins; but now they have some idea of his holiness and justice, he appears an infinite enemy. They are consulting therefore some way to be at peace with him, because they are afraid the controversy will issue in their destruction. Upon this account they resolve on new obedience, from the same motives that influence slaves to obey their severe tyrannical masters, though the rule of their obedience is directly contrary to the inclinations of their minds. Were the penalty of the law taken away, their aversion to it would quickly appear. They would soon again embrace their beloved lusts with the same pleasure and delight as formerly. Is not the truth of this assertion frequently, alas! exemplified in those who wear off their convictions and reformations together, and, notwithstanding their appearances of religion, discover the alienation of their hearts from God and his law, and show themselves (as the apostle expresses it) "enemies in their minds by their wicked works."

The true penitent, on the contrary, sees an admirable beauty and excellency in a life of holiness, and therefore strives for higher attainments in it.—He is sensible how much he has transgressed the law of God, and how very far he is departed from the purity and holiness of the divine nature: this is the burden of his soul; hence it is that he walks in heaviness: he mourns, not because the law is so strict, or the penalty so severe, for he esteems the law to be holy, and "the commandment holy, just, and good;" but he mourns, that though the "law is spiritual, he is carnal, sold under sin;" he mourns that his nature is so contrary to God, that his practice has been so opposite to his will, and that he makes no better progress in mortifying the deeds of

the flesh, and in regulating his affections by the word of God. The true penitent is breathing with the same earnestness after sanctification, as after deliverance from the wrath revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness; he does not want to have the law bend to his corruptions, but to have his heart and life fully subjected to the law of God: there is nothing he so much desires, besides an interest in Christ and the favor of God, as a freedom from sin, a proficiency in faith and holiness, a life of communion and fellowship with God. "What a corrupted evil heart (he says) have I—so estranged from the holy nature of God and his righteous law! what a most guilty wretch have I been, who have walked so contrary to the glorious God, who have trampled upon his excellent perfections, and have made so near an approach to the practice and spirit of a devil! Create a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; purify this sink of pollution, and sanctify these depraved affections of my soul. O that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep thy statutes! O let me not wander from thy commandments, but deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word."

Such as these are the desires of every true penitent: and from hence you may plainly discover the great difference between him and a false one. The one looks upon God with dread, terror, and aversion; the other mourns his distance from him, and earnestly desires to be transformed into his likeness; the one still loves his sins in his heart, though he mourns there is a law to punish them; the other hates all his sins without reserve, and is weary under the burden of them, because they are contrary to God and his holy law: the obedience of the one is by mere constraint; the imperfections of the other are matter of continual humiliation, that makes him aspire after great degrees of grace and holiness; the one can find no inward and abiding complacency in the service of God; the other accounts it his happiness, and thinks no joy equal to that of pure obedience.

## SUNDAY XIX.—CHAP. XIX.

### THE NATURE OF TRUE REPENTANCE FURTHER EXPLAINED.

TRUE repentance being the foundation of all Christian piety, it is a matter of great importance that we should be thoroughly instructed in its nature.—We have endeavored therefore to make you fully acquainted with it by contrasting it to that false repentance which is principally liable to be confounded with it. *False* repentance, we have observed, is excited only by terror: *true*, is the effect of a just sense of the evil of sin, and a love to the blessed God. *False* repentance is full of unbelief: *true*, is animated with confidence by a Saviour's promises, and inspired with gratitude to him. *False* repentance is consistent with an aversion to God and his law, while the *true* sees an infinite beauty in holiness, and loves the commandments of God. Thus in their origin and nature they differ essentially from each other, nor shall we perceive a difference less striking if we attend to the progress and effects of each.

1. False repentance wears off with the alarming convictions which gave occasion to it; but true repentance is permanent. We have many sad instances of persons who appear for a season under the greatest remorse for their sins; yet all these impressions are soon effaced, and they return to the same course of impiety or sensuality, which, they confess, produced so much distress and terror.—They declare to the world that their good resolu-

tions were but as a morning cloud, or as an early dew. Besides these, there are many of another character, who quiet their consciences and speak peace to their souls, from their having been in distress and terror for their sins, from their reformation of some grosser immoralities, and from a formal course of duty. They have repented, they think, and therefore conclude themselves at peace with God, and seem to have no great care and concern either about their former impieties, or their daily transgressions. They conclude themselves in a converted state, and are therefore lukewarm and secure. Many of these may think, and perhaps speak loudly of a spiritual life, and be even elated with joyful apprehensions of their safe state; whilst, alas! they have no apprehensions of their sins, no mourning after pardon, no humiliation under remaining and manifold corruptions, imperfect duties, and renewed provocations against God. There are many also, it might still further be added, who, while under the stings of an awakened conscience, will be driven to maintain a diligent watch over their hearts and lives, to be afraid of every sin, to be careful to attend to every known duty, and even to be serious and earnest in the performance of it. Now by this their supposed progress in religion, they gradually escape from the terrors of the law, and then their watchfulness and tenderness of conscience are forgotten. They attend their duties in a careless manner, with a trifling remiss frame of soul, whilst the all-important realities of an eternal world are but little in their minds, and all their religion is reduced to a mere cold formality. They still maintain the form, but are unconcerned about the power of godliness. In some such manner false repentance leaves the soul destitute of that entire change and renovation, without which no man shall see the Lord.

On the other hand, true repentance is a lasting principle of humble self-abasing mourning for sin, and abhorrence of all remaining corruption. A true penitent does not forget his past sins, and grow unconcerned about them as soon as he obtains peace in his conscience and a comfortable hope that he is reconciled to God; on the contrary, the clearer the evidence he obtains of the divine favor, the more does he loathe, abhor, and condemn himself for his sins; the more aggravated and enormous do they appear to him. He not only continues to abhor himself on account of his past guilt and defilement, but he finds daily cause to renew his repentance before God: he observes so much deadness, formality, and hypocrisy mixing themselves with his holy duties; such frequent revolts of a carnal, worldly, unbelieving spirit; so much difficulty in obtaining a perfect mastery over the sin which easily besets him, that he cannot "but groan, being burdened." Repentance, therefore, is his daily continued exercise, till mortality is swallowed up of life; he will not cease to repent till he ceases to carry about with him so many imperfections and failings: and *that* will not be till he departs from this fallen world. "Have I hope (says he) that God has pardoned my sins?—What an instance of mercy is this! How adorable is that marvellous grace which has plucked such a brand out of the fire! And am I still so cold, so formal, and lifeless, doing so little for him who has done so much for me! Ah, vile sinful heart! Ah, base ingratitude, to such amazing goodness! O that I could obtain more victory over my corruptions; that I could render more thankfulness for such mercies as I have received; and possess a frame of mind more spiritual and heavenly! How long have I been mourning over my infirmities, and must I yet have cause to mourn over the same defects? How often designing, and pursuing a closer communion with God: but what a poor progress do

I yet make, save in desires and endeavors! How would the iniquities of my best duties separate betwixt God and my soul for ever, had I not the Redeemer's merits to plead! What need have I every day to have this polluted soul washed in the blood of Christ, and to repair to the glorious Advocate with the Father, for the benefit of his intercession? Not a step can I take in my spiritual progress, without fresh supplies from the fountain of grace and strength! and yet how often am I provoking him to withdraw his influences, in whom is all my hope and confidence! O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

Thus, the true penitent, in his highest attainments of holiness, comfort, and joy, will find cause to be deeply humbled before God, and to make earnest application for fresh pardon and new supplies of strengthening and quickening grace. The difference therefore betwixt these two sorts of penitents is very apparent; it is as great as that between the running of water in the paths after a violent shower, and the streams which flow from a living fountain. A false repentance has grief of mind and humiliation only for great and glaring offences; or, till it supposes pardon for them obtained. True repentance is a continued war against all the defilements of sin, till death sounds the retreat.

Again; False repentance does at most produce only a partial reformation, but true repentance is a total change of heart, and universal turning from sin to God. As some particular or more gross iniquity generally excites that distress and terror which is the life of false repentance, so a reformation with respect to those sins, too frequently wears off the impression, and gives rest to the troubled conscience without any further change. Or at best, there will be some darling lust retained, some right hand or right eye spared. If the false penitent is afraid of sins of commission, he will still live in the omission or careless performance of known duty, and feel no guilt. Or if he is very zealous for the duties respecting the immediate worship of God, he will live in strife, injustice, and uncharitableness towards men. If he shows some activity in contending earnestly for the truth of the gospel, he will still have his heart and affections glued to the world, and pursue it as the object of his chief desire and delight. If he should make conscience of opposing all open actual sins, yet he little regards the sins of his heart; silent envy, secret pride, self-preference, unbelief, or some such heart-defiling sins. To finish his character; whatever progress he may seem to make in religion, his heart is still estranged from the power of godliness, and, like the Laodiceans, he is neither hot nor cold.

If we proceed to take a view of the character of a true penitent, it is directly contrary to this. He finds indeed (as has been observed) continual occasion to lament the great imperfections of his heart and life, and accordingly seeks renewed pardon in the blood of Christ. But though he has not already attained, neither is already perfect, yet he is pressing towards perfection. He is watching and striving against all his corruptions, and laboring after further conformity to God in all holy conversation and godliness. He does not renounce one lust and retain another; or satisfy himself with devotional duties, whilst he undervalues scrupulous honesty and unfeigned benevolence; he cannot rest till this is his rejoicing, even the "testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, he has his conversation in the world." All the workings of his mind, as well as his external conduct, fall under his cognizance and inspection, and his daily exercise and desire are to approve himself unto him who knows his thoughts afar off. His



reformation extends not only to the devotion of the church, but to that of his family and closet; not only to his conversation, but to his tempers and affections, and to the duties of every relation he sustains among men. His repentance brings forth its meet fruits, heavenly-mindedness, humility, meekness, charity, patience, forgiveness of injuries, self-denial; and is accompanied with all other graces of the blessed Spirit.

"It is the desire of my soul (saith the true penitent) to refrain my feet from every evil way, and walk within my house with a perfect heart. I know I have to do with a God that trieth the heart, and hath pleasure in uprightness, I would therefore set the Lord always before me. I know that my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, for which I am humbled in mine own eyes; but yet my desire is before the Lord, and my groaning is not hid from him. I can truly say, that I hate vain thoughts, but God's law do I love. O that God would give me understanding, that I may keep his law, and observe it with my whole heart. I would serve God without any reserve, for I esteem his precepts concerning all things to be right, and I have inclined my heart to keep his statutes always even unto the end."

Once more, False repentance basely yields to the fear of man; whilst true repentance is full of boldness and courage for God. Thousands, in obedience to the calls and warnings they have received, begin seemingly to repent; but, loving the praise of men, and not being able to endure the contempt and ridicule of the hypocritical and profane for their attachment to God, turn aside from the holy commandment. Their own family, the persons with whom they are connected or on whom they depend, must at all hazards be respected and pleased. No sinful ways therefore must be condemned with abhorrence, that may risk the favor of those who can do them so much service or injury in the world.

The true penitent, on the contrary, will carefully avoid every temptation to past offences, and every occasion that might endanger a relapse. He will not dissemble; he will not conform so far to the world as to be found where temptation appears in its most inviting forms; and where the studied end of the assembly or amusement is such as diverts the thoughts from God and eternity. In like manner, for conscience sake, he will forego temporal advantages, and break through the ties even of sweetest friendship and of nearest kindred, rather than be drawn back by either, into his former neglect and contempt of duty. He will walk circumspectly with a godly jealousy over all things and persons connected with him, lest any of them should prove a snare or a hinderance to him in the way to eternal life, now opened before his eyes. It is his steadfast purpose, lose or suffer what he may, to wage eternal war with the prevailing errors and favorite sins that abound in the world, and to say to all the insinuating advocates for them, "Depart from me, ye wicked, I will keep the commandments of my God."

In short, in these important particulars lie the difference between false and true repentance. The former is only an external reformation, destitute of all the graces of the blessed Spirit: the latter, a change of the heart, will, and affections, as well as of the outward conversation; a change which is attended with all the fruits and graces of the Spirit of God. False repentance aims at just so much of religion, as will keep the mind easy, and calm the awakened conscience; true repentance aims ever to walk before God in an humble, watchful, believing frame of soul. The former will obey the law and command of God just as far as the world will permit without persecution or reproach; the latter

with an invincible regard to the glory of God, is content to go through evil report, and good report, content with the approbation of God, let men think or say what they please.

## SUNDAY XX.—CHAP. XX.

THE UNIVERSAL OBLIGATIONS OF REPENTANCE, AND DIRECTIONS TO ATTAIN IT.

If the word of God were received with that degree of deference which is so justly due to it, there would be no necessity for stating more than the simple declaration of Scripture which requires *all* men to repent, in order to show the universal obligation of true repentance. But alas! it is too common to form our judgment of duty from the general practice of a careless world, or from hasty and erroneous conceptions of the nature of virtue, rather than from the oracles of truth. In direct contradiction to the Scripture declarations, it has been a prevailing opinion, that those alone need repentance whose abominations every eye can see; whose lewdness or drunkenness, dishonesty or profaneness, are open and excessive. Ignorant of the natural depravity and apostasy of the whole human race from God, or proudly prejudiced against this doctrine, they of course suppose much evil must actually be practised, before a total change of heart and life can become absolutely necessary.

To speak more particularly: a young gentleman, who has been sober and dutiful to his parents, well esteemed abroad, and commended at home, kept by the influence of his station from the temptation of doing what is accounted base before men, is apt so to over-rate his own sober conduct, as to suppose he has no occasion for any godly sorrow or trouble of mind in the view of his own transgressions. He is apt to conclude that you degrade his character by calling him to the exercise of serious repentance.

In the same manner, a young lady, born to inherit wealth, educated to be affable and polite, to love peace and harmony, cannot be guilty of any thing the world calls sinful without doing violence to all the restraints of modesty, decency, and character. Of consequence, self-pleasing thoughts of her own innocence and goodness hold firm possession of her mind. She cannot believe that it is necessary for a person of her good character to feel shame and sorrow for sin, and a broken contrite heart, or to seek after any such change as Scriptural repentance means.

But notwithstanding the attempts of many celebrated and learned advocates for the innocency of such amiable characters, the Scripture, which must prevail at last, and be found the only true standard of what is excellent,—the Scripture has concluded all under sin. It is therefore a most certain truth, that sober, decent, and dutiful as you may be in the eyes of parents, relations, or friends, yet if you are ignorant of any divine change, and a stranger to those inward effectual workings which constitute Scripture repentance, you are far from being in a state of innocency or safety; a charge of great guilt remains in full force against you; a charge which makes repentance as absolutely needful for you, as if your iniquities were of a more glaring kind. This charge shall now be made good.

Let it then be supposed, that you are a young person altogether decent, and in the eyes of the world lovely in your whole deportment; let it be supposed that not a relation or a friend sees any thing in you to be amended; yet consider, O much-admired youth, how your heart is affected!

towards Him, who made, preserves, and blesses you; from whose bounty you have received all those endowments, the cultivation of which makes you the agreeable person you are. Do you fear and do you love him! Do you make conscience of employing your time, your talents, your influence, as he has commanded you to do? Are you afraid of conformity to the manners and tempers of the world, and jealous of friendship with it as enmity against God? Do you hear his word with reverence, and in the solemn time of prayer labor to check every impertinent vain thought? Are you restrained in your conversation by his law, from giving into that fashionable way of discourse, which at once indulges and strengthens pride, sensuality, or covetousness? Are you desirous to live in subjection to God, and careful to inform yourself what he would have you to do? Is your dependence continually on the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and strength?

If conscience witnesses against you that you are a stranger to such intentions and tempers (and thus it does witness, unless you have truly repented,) then however admired, however in reality more serious and sober than those of your early age, certainly your whole life has been sin and provocation, perpetually repeated; because it has been entirely led under the power of a depraved mind. Your study and aim have been above every thing to please yourself and to please men, whilst the holy will of God and his honor have scarce had any place in your thoughts. In the midst of all the decent regard you have been paying to every one about you, God has cause to complain that he only has been treated by you with dissimulation and neglect, if not with scorn. But now, if the fact really is so, that you have dissembled with God, neglected and despised him; is it not a vain plea against the necessity of repentance, to say that you are innocent of the common vices of youth, and have an unblemished character? For is not this charge of sinfulness in your behaviour towards the most high God, sufficiently comprehensive both in the eye of reason and Scripture to prove the necessity of your feeling deep humiliation and self-abhorrence?—Does it not make an entire renovation of mind absolutely needful? or can any one be absurd enough to suppose the guilt of withholding all esteem, desire, and affection from God, is in a manner cancelled by an amiable deportment to brothers or sisters, relations or friends? If a sense of your obligations to God as your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, has no share in directing your pursuits and modelling your tempers, the difference with respect to God must be of very little account whether your reigning self-love be gratified in a way more reputable amongst men, rather than in one which would expose you as well to shame here as to the wrath of God. In one case as well as the other there is no sense of God, no practice of your duty towards him, and therefore unless true repentance takes place, you still remain an apostate creature, involved in all the capital guilt and misery of the fall; you remain a creature setting up your own will above the law of God, consequently, if you die under the power of such a spirit you must perish for ever.

Equally vain and frivolous is it, (though so deplorably frequent,) for men to confide in the fidelity and justice with which they trade, or in the general benevolence of their character, as if this was to supersede in their case the necessity of repentance. For you may detest every species of dishonesty and villany, of cruel and oppressive deportment, whilst pride and self-sufficiency reign undisturbed in your soul; whilst every temper by which due homage is paid to God, is a stranger to your heart. Honesty

and benevolence, upon whatever principle they are exercised, are sure to be applauded by selfish men, yet must these dispositions be the offspring of an humble heart, before they can find acceptance with God. "Though I give all my goods to the poor," unless this love of my neighbor springs from love to God, (which before true repentance can have no place in my heart,) "it profiteth me nothing," will not be found a virtue, when "weighed in the balance of the sanctuary." So far, indeed, is the practice of social duties from rendering godly sorrow, humiliation for sin, and absolute dependence upon the blood of Christ unnecessary, that the haughty profane imagination of its doing so, as much needs mercy to pardon it, as the grossest act of injustice towards men; since it proves the whole head and heart, which could give place to such a thought, utterly depraved.

You have now been instructed in the nature of true repentance, and the indispensable necessity there is that every fallen creature should experience that entire change of judgment, practice, and affections, which true repentance implies: I would flatter myself, therefore, that your conscience is now in some degree awakened; I would flatter myself that you have an earnest desire to be informed "what course you must take to be brought into a state of true repentance;" if this is your desire, instead of multiplying directions, it will suffice to press you to observe the few following.

*First,* Frequently read the Scripture with seriousness and unfeigned submission to it, as the method prescribed by God himself for your recovery; and let your thoughts dwell on what immediately respects your own case, that is, the nature and workings of true repentance. The fifty-first Psalm will unfold to you the heart of the penitent contrite David; and the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, the affecting return of a sinner in your own condition to his much injured father. The same inward and entire change of heart is described at large in the fifth chapter of the Ephesians, and in the sixth also to the 17th verse. Upon these and similar portions of Scripture you must carefully meditate. Whilst thus employed, you are in the way to receive some enlivening communications, to find desires after God spring up in your soul; to feel the working of those very dispositions towards him, which, as you have learned from his own word, denote true repentance.

*Secondly,* Consider the corruption of your nature, and the many sins you have actually committed. Only commune with your own heart, and you will immediately find your inclinations strongly bent to many things, which your conscience tells you ought not to be done; and that you have a great aversion to other things, which are in themselves excellent, and ought to be done by you; you will observe a miserable confusion and inconsistency in your thoughts, a perverseness in your will, and a prevailing sensuality in your affections.

The fruit of this universal depravity you must also carefully observe, as it has appeared in the multitude of your transgressions. Think on the several places you have lived in, and what in each of these your sins have been; take an account of your offences against those with whom you have dealt in a way of trade, conversed with intimacy and friendship, or those on whom you should have had compassion and exercised the most tender love: mark those sins which have arisen from your outward circumstances; and, above all, reflect deeply on what is, strictly speaking, your own iniquity; the sin to which you are most enslaved, whether passion, envy, unclean desire, pride and self-conceit, lying, the love of money or of esteem; take notice in how many instances it has broken out, so



as to leave uneasy impressions on your mind, and yet has been again and again repeated: after this, think how often you have stifled convictions: how often turned away from the offers of grace and calls to repentance; think of your sins against a Redeemer; reflect how long you have willingly lived in ignorance of his undertaking, have disregarded his obedience, though the righteousness of God, and his sacrifice, though that of the Son of God: think of the despite you have done against the Holy Spirit, resisting his motions, and excusing yourself from a compliance with his secret suggestions. And then at the end of all, reckon up the several aggravations of your sin, the judgments and afflictions, the mercies and deliverances, the counsels and reproofs, the light and knowledge, the vows and promises against which you have sinned.

*Thirdly*, You must pray to the God of all grace, to give you repentance unto life. Naturally you suppose you have it in your own power to repent just when you please; at least you suppose the alarming circumstances of sickness and approaching death will of themselves induce you to repent. But this is a vain and proud opinion, which experience daily proclaims to be without foundation, and which the Bible exposes as false to every attentive reader, by calling repentance "the gift of God." For to produce in the heart an abiding sense and detestation of our own vileness, with confidence in the pardoning mercy of God through Christ, with a zeal for his glory expressing itself in newness of life, (which alone is what the Bible means by repentance,) to produce a change of this nature belongeth only to the effectual working of God's Holy Spirit. Self-love and pride, with all their force, withstand the charge of sinfulness: every natural inclination of the soul rises up in arms, and opposes with all its might true humiliation. At the same time it is impossible, without divine light and supernatural teaching, to discover any such loveliness in a just and sin hating God, or in a faithful obedience to his law, as to create abhorrence of sinful lusts, too long cherished and indulged as the sources of gratification and pleasure. Therefore it is from the grace of God alone, the fountain of every good and perfect gift, that you must receive repentance unto life. It is your part as a reasonable and immortal creature, to hear the command of God to repent; and as a helpless sinner, insufficient to every good work, to pray for his almighty Spirit, that you may be obedient to it. It is your part meekly to confess your own inability to glorify God by true repentance, and to beg of him, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, that you may be turned to him, seeing and bewailing the sin of your nature as well as of your practice, of your heart as well as of your life, and desiring grace to approve yourself to God in newness of spirit a sincere penitent.

## SUNDAY XXI.—CHAP. XXI.

### THE DISPOSITIONS OF A CHRISTIAN TOWARDS GOD.

As God is altogether lovely in himself, and in his benefits towards us inexpressibly great, so nothing can be more evident than that he ought to reign in our affections without a rival. But to yield this most rightful worship to his Creator, man is naturally averse: and it is owing only to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, enforced by the power of the Holy Spirit, that the Christian renounces his natural disaffection to his Creator, and glorifies him as God.

"The grace of God," saith the Scripture, "which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men:" not merely enjoining them by the force of a command,

but "teaching them," that is, by the communication of divine knowledge, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;" to loathe the very thought of insulting any more their adorable Benefactor by rebellion, or of dishonoring him by neglect. The doctrines of grace, like an affectionate tutor, form men to obedience; and when clearly manifested to the understanding and cordially embraced, they make every duty we owe to our Creator appear both rational and easy. They give us a heart, a hand, and sufficient ability to exercise ourselves unto universal godliness.

Having, therefore, already explained and established those doctrines of grace, which constitute the divine knowledge peculiar and essential to a Christian, I now proceed to a particular delineation of that most excellent practice by which he differs from the enslaved multitude of unbelieving sinners; that practice which he esteems his bounden duty, and by which he shows forth the praises of his God and Saviour, who hath called him out of darkness into his marvellous light.

We begin with those various dispositions towards the ever-blessed God, of which the habitual exercise is to be found in the heart of every real Christian.

1. The first disposition of this kind is fear. This is one of those great springs of action by which rational creatures are influenced. It is of the highest importance, therefore, to have this affection exercised upon some just object, so that the mind may, on the one hand, be armed against vain terrors, and, on the other, be duly impressed by those things which ought to be dreaded. In this excellent manner the affection of fear is regulated in the Christian's breast. Temporal evils of every kind he discerns to be nothing more than instruments in the hand of God, wholly subserving his pleasure, and unable to affect man's most important interest.—Therefore, he sanctifies the Lord God in his heart, and regards as his fear and his dread, him who is too wise to be deceived, too just to be biassed, too mighty to be resisted, and too majestic to be contemplated without reverence and self-abasement. Very different is his fear of the Most High from the terror of a slave, that uneasy feeling, which causes the object of it to be considered with pain. His is the fear of a rational creature towards its all-perfect Creator, of a servant towards a tender master, of a child towards its wise and merciful father; therefore, in the same proportion as he increases in the knowledge of God, he increases also in the fear of him. And so inseparable is such a temper of mind towards God, where his attributes are known, that the bright inhabitants of heaven express themselves as if they could not suppose it possible there should be a reasonable being void of such a disposition; for they say, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of saints! who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou art holy?"

A Christian fears the Lord, so as to stand in awe: he can neither be bribed nor intimidated wilfully to sin against him. But as he is encompassed with infirmities, snares, and temptations, so he finds it necessary at some seasons, to the end of his life, to repel solicitations to evil by reflecting upon the severity of God's vengeance on impenitent sinners, and meditating upon the wrath of God revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. In this fear of the Lord is safety; and the longer he lives under its influence, the more it becomes a generous filial fear.

2. This fear, therefore, does not hinder, but promote the exercise of another disposition towards God, which is most conspicuous in every real

Christian, namely, a readiness to obey God without reserve. He beholds his Maker's absolute dominion over him founded in his very being. Every faculty of his soul, and every member of his body, is a witness of his Maker's righteous claim to his life and to his labors: when he requires them to be employed in his service, he does but appoint the use of what is his own absolute property. Ever conscious of this, he resolutely regards the authority of God in a world which despises it: he uniformly persists in obedience to him; though his natural corruptions, his worldly interest, and the prevailing customs of the world should oppose it. In his judgment, the command of God alone constitutes a practice reasonable and necessary. He wants no higher authority to confirm it; nor can any objections from selfish considerations induce him to evade its force, or prevaricate concerning the obligation of the command. He makes his prayer unto the God of his life, to teach him his statutes; to set his heart at liberty from every evil bias, that he may run the way of his commandments. He says unto God, "I am thine, O, save me, for I have sought thy commandments." And when, through surprise, he has been drawn aside, shame, sorrow, and indignation succeed his transgression, and he becomes more humble, and more vigilant also, against future temptations.

3. Gratitude to God is also a distinguishing part of the Christian disposition. Where there is any degree of honesty and generosity of mind, there will necessarily be a desire also of testifying a due sense of favors received; an eagerness to embrace the first opportunity of convincing our Friend and Benefactor, that we feel our obligations. In the case of benefits and favors conferred by man upon man, all acknowledge the duty of this grateful return, and all are ready to brand with ignominy the ingrate who repays with ill-will or neglect his liberal patron. But, alas! where the obligation is the greatest possible, it is often the least felt, and men scruple not to treat with neglect the Supreme Benefactor of the human race. From this detestable crime the real Christian alone stands exempted. He perceives cogent and continual reasons for gratitude to God, and is impressed by them. He is deeply sensible of the bounty of his Maker in all the providences relating both to his body and to his soul. Food and raiment, health and strength, he day by day receives as undeserved instances of the loving kindness of his God; and all these common blessings keep alive a glow of gratitude to God within him. But much more is he excited to thankfulness upon considering the mercies relating to his eternal interest. He freely acknowledges that God might have justly cut him off whilst he was living in rebellion against his law; or have left him to continue under that dreadful hardness and blindness of heart, which so long had power over him. Instead of this he can say, "He hath opened my eyes and changed my heart; conquered the stubbornness of my own will, and given me an unfeigned desire to be conformed to his; made me a member of Christ; persuaded me by his Spirit of the truth and absolute necessity of redemption by the Son of God. I am able, in some degree, to comprehend with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of Christ. I have a distinct view of that long train of reproaches, miseries, and torments, which my salvation cost the Lord of life and glory. I behold, on the one hand, the fathomless abyss of woe from which he has rescued me; on the other, the eternal glory he has promised for my inheritance. Whilst I meditate upon all these things, and grow more and more intimately acquainted with their truth, I feel upon my mind an increasing conviction that the

Lord hath dealt bountifully with me. I am glad to confess that no slave can be so absolutely the property of his master, as I am of God; nor any pensioner, though supported by the most rich and undeserved bounty, so strongly engaged to gratitude, as I am to glorify God both with my body and with my soul, which are his."

That such is the continual language of a Christian, is evident from the apostle's declaration.—When he is showing the powerful motive which influenced him and all the followers of the Lamb to such eminent zeal in his service, he says, "The love of Christ constraineth us:" with a pleasing force it bears down all opposition before it, like a mighty torrent, and carries forth our souls in all the effusions of an ingenuous gratitude and thankfulness towards God.

4. Another eminent part of the Christian disposition is affiance in God. The sin of unbelief, though so often upbraided in Scripture, so dishonorable to God, and so hurtful to ourselves, is still the sin which naturally prevails in all men: and even the Christian is sometimes assaulted and greatly perplexed by it. But though he must confess that, in seasons of great difficulty and danger, he is sometimes afraid; he can say, with equal truth, "Yet will I put my trust in God." He can and does habitually pay to his Maker that most acceptable homage of placing his supreme confidence in him. He, and he alone, can do this: because he not only knows in general that great is the Lord, and great is his power, yea and his wisdom is infinite; but he has positive and express promises of grace, mercy, and peace, made to him. For as true repentance, humiliation, and faith in Jesus, have taken possession of his heart, and are habitually exercised by him, so when he looks into the holy volume, he sees God always described as full of compassion, and abundant in mercy and truth to all repenting and believing sinners. The sight of this constantly invigorates his hope and increases his confidence.

Besides he is persuaded that God has given his dear Son not only as a pledge of his affection towards sinners, but as a sin-offering for them. On the merit of this sacrifice he builds his confidence: he fixes his dependence, where alone it ought to be, on the God of his salvation. "God hath promised," saith he, "to bring every one to glory, who receives his only-begotten Son, and trusts to his arm. He hath confirmed this promise even by an oath; he hath engaged himself by a covenant, ratified by the blood of his Son. This Son, now as Mediator and High-priest of his church, appears perpetually before the throne of glory for all who come to God by him; he makes effectual intercession for the relief of their wants, and for the gift of all things which can edify, comfort, and make them meet for heaven."—Filled with this knowledge, and emboldened by it, he trusts in the Lord, and supports himself upon his God. "Though it would be presumption," he saith, "and enthusiasm in me to expect to receive from God what he has no where promised, or what he has promised, in a way different from what he has prescribed, yet whilst I am living by faith in the Son of God, and testifying my unfeigned subjection to him as my sovereign Lord, I cannot but rejoice in the thought that God is faithful, who has given us exceeding great and precious promises, and that he is able to do exceedingly above all that I can ask or think."

And as the Christian first exercises trust in God, encouraged by the revelation he has made of himself in the gospel, and the promises he has freely given, which none besides himself receive with sincerity: so upon every advance he makes in knowledge and grace, the grounds of his affiance in God



grow clearer and stronger. His own happy experience confirms the truth of every promise which at first engaged his dependence. The truth of the word of the Lord is by a vast variety of temptations and enemies tried to the uttermost, that it may be made manifest whether there is any deceit in it: but the experiment, though ever so often repeated, always confirms its value. He beholds his vile affections weakened and mortified, the violence of his enemies restrained, the pleasures and hopes of his spiritual life all exactly corresponding with the account given in the holy word of God. Therefore, from this complete evidence of its truth, he sees that it is good for him to hold fast by God, and to put his trust in the Lord God. And though whilst he remains in this fallen world, and has the principle of corruption in his heart, he may often find evil propensities and the workings of unbelief; yet he is grieved, ashamed, and confounded at their appearance; he complains of himself unto God; he cries, Lord, increase my faith, deliver me from an evil heart of unbelief. And thus he is enabled with boldness to say, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song, he also is become my salvation."

But what completes the Christian's trust in God, even under the most afflictive visitations, is the promise from himself repeated upon various occasions, to this effect, "That all things shall work together for good to them that love God." Rom. viii. 28. His afflictions therefore he believes are so far from being the scourge of an enemy, or the wound of a cruel one; so far from coming by chance, or upon a design of vengeance, that they are sent with a view to his welfare. It is for our profit that God afflicts, to make us partakers of his holiness. A lively persuasion of this truth prevents the cross from galling, though it does not remove it; it gives to every suffering a kindly and friendly appearance. "Thou, O God, of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled; it is the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

5. It is a distinguishing part of the Christian's temper in "all things to give glory to God." We give glory to another, when, with high esteem and cordial regard, we declare the excellences he possesses. The Christian constantly endeavors in this manner to glorify God; to convince all who observe his deportment, that he looks upon the goodness, wisdom, holiness, and sovereign dominion of God in such an amiable light, as cheerfully to employ all his powers and faculties in his service. The false motives, the spurious principles which give birth to so many fair appearances and seemingly good works, have no rule in his heart. He is not restrained from evil, through the fear of shame or of loss; nor is it the love of praise or self-applause which excites him to do well; it is a sense of duty towards his Maker, and a regard to his command. He offers all his social virtues and all his religious performances unto God, with a predominant desire that his glorious majesty may receive more and more homage and service from himself and all around him. The utility of actions is the only point regarded by the world; they care not from what principle they flow, provided good accrues from them to society. But the Christian knows that God sees not as man sees; that he regards chiefly the disposition of mind from whence our actions arise, and above every thing the respect they have to himself. "God hath commanded me," saith he, "to do whatever I do, heartily as unto the Lord, and not as unto men." When I am discharged therefore, and fulfilling the duties of my particular relation in life as a servant or master, a

husband or a son, a tradesman or a magistrate, it is my unfeigned desire that all may perceive me to act conscientiously, because I 'esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right,' and am persuaded he has given us a law in these respects, which ought not to be broken. It is this holy aim, I know, can alone consecrate my conduct, make it truly religious, and therefore good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

6. Inseparable from this design in the Christian to give glory to God, is a studious concern to approve himself sincere before him, by the purity of his heart. He has a much nobler and higher aim than the hypocrite or the mere moralist. They both can be satisfied with a freedom from gross offences, and think God's authority sufficiently regarded, if the practice of all outward wickedness is carefully avoided. The work and labor of a Christian, on the contrary, is all within; to prevent the deadly fruit of sin in the branches, by opposing or mortifying it in the root. Though he cannot totally suppress the pruriency of evil thoughts, nor eradicate the perception of bad impressions from outward objects or inward corruptions, he is alarmed at their intrusion; and with such an emotion as a sovereign feels at the first appearances of rebellion in his kingdom, he cries unto God to rise to his succor, and immediately to expel his enemies.—What was at first an involuntary motion in his mind, (sad indication of his evil nature!) he will not suffer to grow more exceeding sinful by cherishing it, or by being at peace with it. For this he regards as a plain mark of remaining love for sin, though motives of selfish fear or convenience restrain from the commission of it.

To illustrate this excellent disposition still more distinctly, the Christian in youth and health, does much more than avoid the brothel or the harlot.—He is offended at wanton jesting and filthy talking; he loathes the pictures a corrupt imagination would be painting before him, and resists the impure lustings of his heart. In business and merchandise he does more than renounce the bag of deceitful weights and the frauds of villany; he renounces the love of money, as one who is indeed a stranger upon earth, and adopted into the family of God. In his behavior towards his competitors and his enemies, he does not content himself with abstaining from vilifying them by slander, or assaulting them with railing. He condemns and watches against silent envy, secret animosity, and injurious surmises. He appears vindictive and malicious in his own eyes, whenever he detects himself listening with pleasure to others who are speaking evil of his foes, though the charge is founded on truth. He bewails so plain a proof of the power of irregular self-love and uncharitableness in his heart. To mention no more instances, the Christian is not satisfied in refraining from speaking vainly and proudly of his own accomplishments and advantages (this good sense will check, and good manners teach to be irksome to others,) but he maintains an obstinate conflict with self-admiration and self-complacency in his own breast; not desisting till he has put these grand enemies to the glory of God and his grace to flight before him. In each of these, and many other instances, he ascribes unto God the honor due unto his name, as the Lord of conscience, as the God "who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, and requireth truth in the inward parts." He "sets the Lord always before him;" and this is the purport of his constant desire, observed by the omniscient Judge: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

## SUNDAY XXII.—CHAP. XXII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

True religion has the honor and glory of God for its object. It brings back man to his allegiance to his Creator; it implants in his mind every holy and generous disposition which tends to glorify God.—Thus we have seen that it teaches him to regard God as his fear and dread; it requires a cheerful and universal obedience to his authority; it inspires him with gratitude, animates him with confidence towards his Creator, induces him always to aim at the promotion of his glory, and leads him to cultivate a purity of motive in all his actions. Such are the dispositions, as they respect God, which it is the business of Christianity to form in man. Besides these, there are also others equally excellent, which it is my design at present to set before you; in all which you will discover the same supreme regard to the Creator, and ascription of that honor and glory which so justly belong to him.

7. Care to imitate God in what he is the proper object of imitation, form a principal feature in the Christian's disposition. He prays and labors to have transcribed on his own heart, and to express in his life, the holiness and righteousness of God; his forbearance, mercy, and communicative goodness.—And in order to behold these attributes where they shine with the greatest clearness and the most transforming efficacy, he contemplates them living and breathing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who in this, as well as every other sense, "is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person." Upon this all-perfect pattern he steadfastly fixes his eye, as a painter upon a portrait, when copying from an invaluable original. He labors with carefulness and persevering attention, to bring himself to a more near and striking likeness of his God and Saviour. It is the work of his life to advance in this resemblance; strongly excited to it by the incomparable excellency of the life and character of Jesus. For he beholds all its parts exhibiting to his view a mind unpolished with any defilement, though inhabiting an earthly tabernacle; a mind adorned with the most lovely tempers; full of all goodness, righteousness, and truth; not judging by the sight of the eye, or charmed with what is most grateful to the voluptuous ear; full of pity towards a wretched sinful world, compassionate to its calamities, unprovoked by its sharpest injuries, and bent upon doing the greatest good, though suffering for it the most cruel treatment.

In such a character there is every thing which demands veneration; and it is not possible constantly to behold, as the real Christian does, this fair beauty of the Lord, without desiring to possess a measure of the same excellences.

The imitation of the life of Jesus has been enjoined by his own command, to which the Christian pays the most cordial submission: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well: for so I am.—If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John xiii. 13–15. The force of this injunction makes all contrariety of temper to the mind that was in Jesus Christ appear to the apprehension of the true believer, though found in himself, deformed and criminal. This opens his eyes to see the glaring delusion of being called after the name of Christ without "walking even as he walked;" without "purifying himself even as Christ is pure;" that is, without being endued with such a conformity to the image of the Son of God, as includes the whole chain of those graces which shone in him; and implies an abhorrence, not of one kind of evil only, or of another, but of the whole body of sin. Hence he is in truth an imitator of his

Lord, inasmuch as every excellent temper, which without measure dwelt in him, has its real, though limited and imperfect influence, over all the living members of his church; it is a declaration descriptive of all real Christians: "We all beholding in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The desire of imitating the life and tempers of Jesus is strengthened exceedingly by the love the Christian bears towards him. We imperceptibly imitate the manners of those we admire; without any studied design on our part, we resemble those who have gained our affections through the greatness of their generosity, and who justify our regard by the greatness of their excellence. It is so between man and man, though the richest favors conferred below are small in value, and the most consummate human characters but the shadow of perfection. How strongly then must the Christian's heart, which is exercised daily in fixing his attention on the riches of his Saviour's love, and the unspeakable kindness expressed in the work of redemption, be excited to imitate so divine a character, the character of him who is his hope, his life, his peace, his God, and his all!

8. The disposition of a Christian stands also distinguished in a very eminent degree, from the spirit of the world, by the affectionate love he bears for God, and the supreme delight and joy he receives from the knowledge of him. Man, sunk into bodily appetites, lifts not up the heavy eye of his mind to God, nor understands that he can be to the faithful soul a richer fund of present comfort and happiness than wealth, grandeur, sensual gratification, or books of learning prove to their several devoted admirers. Hence all expressions of fervent love to God, though free from enthusiastic flights, fall under the censure of the world. They assert that they are nothing but fictitious representations, or if any warmth of affection is really felt, it is to be mechanically accounted for. It is owing to the temperature of the body, to a free circulation of the blood, or the powers of a warm imagination. The Christian, on the contrary, loves the invisible God with as much sincerity of affection as the covetous love their possessions, or the sensualist the joys of voluptuousness.

He loves God as that blessed Being who is infinitely glorious in himself, in whom all excellences meet together, and who possesses them all without the possibility of ever suffering them to be impaired or sullied. Enlightened by the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost, he beholds such goodness in God, as disparages whatever bears its name amongst creatures. Almighty power, and unerring wisdom, unblemished truth, spotless holiness, and tender mercies; every thing adapted to raise the admiration of an intelligent being, he perceives in God. His glory illuminates him in the works of creation and of providence, and manifests itself in the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ in its strongest light. From these views he is excited to love God, and he expresses that love by discovering high and exalted thoughts of him; by reflecting with pleasure on his perfections as they appear in the works of nature, the wonders of grace, or the prospects of glory.—This love of God for his own perfections, though not ordinarily discerned in the Christian at the first, yet as he grows in knowledge and faith becomes indisputably evident. It is discovered, even whilst he is in doubt about his own interest in God: because he will yet esteem and value him, be careful to command his precepts, be faithful in his service, and speak good of his name.

Besides the incomparable excellency of God, a Christian has also other motives to love him. For



he more completely an object is suited to produce to us benefit and advantage, so much the more will our hearts be united to it, and feel a proportionate affection towards it. Accordingly, the Christian loves God as his chief good. "God alone," saith he, "can be a heart-satisfying portion to me. In his favor is my life, whilst all beneath or beside him is replete with vanity and disappointment, too mean, and too transient, fully to satisfy even one appetite; but God is all-sufficient: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I can desire besides thee?'"

This love to God expresses itself by frequent longings that he may share in his pardoning mercy, and be happy for ever in his acceptance. For *this* he is content to part with all: the love of God is to him above every thing. He can say with David, "I entreated thy favor with my whole heart; Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me." He cannot be tranquil, while a cloud obscures his Father's face. The apprehension of his displeasure is most grievous to him; nor can he be satisfied till God is reconciled. He cries with vehemence like David, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." He discovers also the sincerity of his love to God by a delight in him, no less than by desires after him. His soul is at rest whilst he can call God, *his* God. In such a view he rejoices in the divine favor more than he would in calling the whole world his own. It animates him in the highest degree, to think that God is his portion. And so truly does he rejoice in God, and delight in him with sincere affection, as to be satisfied under all the troubles to which he can be exposed. Amidst shame and reproach he can support and solace himself in the thought that God knows his innocence, and approves of him. In necessities, distresses, and afflictions, it is his strongest consolation that in this state the Lord knoweth his path, and that "when he is tried, he shall come forth as gold." Even in the most perilous and dismayingly circumstances, when the judgments of an incensed God are spreading consternation over whole countries, the Christian in his love to God still finds a spring to cheer and refresh his soul, to which none but himself have access. "God is my refuge and strength," saith he, "a very present help in trouble. Therefore will I not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." For in the midst of all this fiery indignation issuing forth against his adversaries, he still beholds God in Christ Jesus reconciled to him and to every humble sinner.

Such as these were the glorious expressions of love to God even before the Lord Jesus Christ had ascended up on high, "leading captivity captive;" it cannot therefore reasonably be supposed that the more explicit knowledge of salvation which we enjoy should not be more than equal to such a blessed effect. If the inspired Habakkuk could find such love to God in his heart as to say, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation;" if a man of like passions with ourselves could so love God as to find comfort in him amidst the horrors of universal death; certainly we may conclude that now, since the Messenger of the covenant, the Day-spring from on high, hath visited the church, the love which a real Christian bears to his God will enable his soul to feel at least as high delight

and exultation in his favor. And though, alas! few are observed in our own day to love God in a degree so fervent and intense as this, yet the endeavor and desire of all who are Christians in sincerity is to do so. And they discover a principle of love the very same as this in kind, by their opposing the first tendencies in themselves to complain, though in a season of great tribulation; by rebuking themselves for the defectiveness of their delight in God, saying, "Why are thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Ps. xlii. 5.

Whether therefore the Christian be weak or strong, still it is apparent that he delights himself in the Lord. When he rejoices and triumphs in the midst of outward troubles, his delight in God blazes with vigor and brightness. And when it is his grief and heavy burden that he cannot act thus, this is still as true an expression of love to God, struggling in a sore conflict under the weight of oppression. For was it not the very joy of his heart to be glad in the Lord, and in every thing to give thanks, he could not possibly feel any pain on account of his dejection or want of joy in God in the time of tribulation. Such delight in God, even in the midst of prosperity, is a thing unintelligible to the world, and the utmost they can conceive attainable by man, is to bear distressing troubles with calmness. Therefore the very desire of a Christian to be strengthened "with all might," according to God's glorious power, "unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness," that is, to bear afflictions with holy triumph, in consideration of what God is to him and has done for him, is a demonstration that he delights in God.

9. It is an eminent part of the disposition of a Christian towards God, to engage with diligence and pleasure in all the various exercises of devotion, and the use of the means of grace. Men have naturally a strong aversion to confession of sin, to prayer and praise, to hearing and reading God's word, and to receive the holy sacrament. They engage in these duties only from custom, or are dragged to them merely to pacify conscience.—These duties are therefore performed in a manner, which denotes the performance to be irksome.—Hence in a few minutes' vain repetition each morning or evening, and in an attendance at church on Sundays, is generally comprised all the devotion of the natural man; in which he is conscious of no more pleasure than a child feels when repeating by rote words of which he understands not the meaning. Or should there be more outward practice of devotion than this, it is from the popish notion that religious duties have in them an atoning virtue, and constitute a man holy, when punctually performed.

How different the temper of a Christian!—he lives in the constant exercise of a devout spirit. His recollection of the sinfulness of his past life, of that hateful period when "all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually;" when self was his god, and God was nothing to him but a name; his consciousness of blindness and depravity, still too much remaining, render it a relief to his soul to pour out before God complaints against himself. As he increases in the knowledge of God and his own duty, the more strong are his desires to prostrate himself before the greatness of eternal Excellency, and to be filled with holy shame and confusion at his own sin and defilement.—Sometimes he finds the springs of ingenuous sorrow opened within, and tastes a most solid satisfaction in giving glory to the holiness of God and his law. And when his affections are not thus influenced, he still engages diligently in the confession of his sin, as a mean of beholding more clearly his

enormity and guilt, and of being impressed with a more steadfast hatred of it. With pleasure also he addresses his prayer to the "Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh," for divine grace to be imparted to him, because he is fully persuaded that the strength and the increase of grace must be maintained by God, and not by himself. Human virtues and social qualities will grow, he sees, in nature's garden; but affiance in God, spiritual obedience, delight in him, and all the tempers becoming a creature and a sinner, must be the workmanship of God by his Spirit, which is given only to them that ask it. Therefore as natural hunger and thirst seek their proper gratifications, and the desire of every living soul is always turned towards that which it apprehends as its chiefest good; so it is his hunger and thirst to receive out of the fulness there is in Christ, grace for grace. So far therefore from thinking prayer a burden, or performing it merely as a duty at particular times and seasons, the Christian may be said to pray without ceasing. All places, as well as his closet and his church, are witnesses of the fellowship he maintains in this manner with an invisible God. If his sleep depart from him, he is awake to the sublime sensations of prayer and devotion.—"With my soul, O God," saith he, "have I desired thee in the night, yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early."

From the same love to God springs a real joy to praise and extol him. "It becometh well the just," saith he, "to be thankful. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name. For he hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.—My mouth shall therefore be filled as it were with marrow and fatness, while I am praising thee with joyful lips. This spiritual banquet shall prove as delicious to my mind as the feast of the epicure does to his palate, when he is swallowing the richest dainties which luxury can procure."

And from the same love which the Christian bears to his God and Saviour, every thing which belongs to God, his word, his institutions, and assemblies, will be objects of his pleasure and delight. "Has God," saith he, "written a book of knowledge and grace for the use of man, and shall I not be glad to read and hear the interesting contents of it? Shall I not converse most frequently with those divine notices of himself which God hath sent us from heaven? Yes, my delight is placed on this book of God; 'O! how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.'"

Has the glorious God appointed a method of worship, and required men to assemble in multitudes to address his divine Majesty? "I love," saith the real Christian, "the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth; one day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

Has God appointed pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting his saints, for the edifying his body the church, and promised to bless and succeed their faithful discourses, and to be with them always to the end of the world?—"It is with raised expectations and steady attention," says the Christian, "that I will hear the ministers of the Lord and look through the infirmities of the speaker to the appointment and promise of the God of all grace, who has seen fit to choose men to be instruments and ministers of grace to men, their hearers. And has he, who was dead for my sins, and is alive again and liveth for evermore, left with his church the memorial of his abundant goodness and bleeding love, commanding his people to feast upon it, that his sacrifice might grow more precious in their eyes? I will, with solemn joy and gratitude, join the faithful company who eat of that bread

and drink of that cup, as a public testimony that every blessing I have received of God, and every benefit I hope for, does and will descend upon me only through the atoning death of Jesus Christ the righteous."

And though it must be confessed, that it is not in the Christian's power to be always full of delight in holy duties; though he has too often cause to bemoan the want of a more devout and spiritual frame of mind when he is using the means of grace; yet the godly disposition of his soul suffers no such change. God is still the constant object of his reverence and trust, of his gratitude and love; and therefore whether the pleasures of devotion in the most solemn acts of it, are more or less, he is still punctual in them: he grows not weary of them, though he does more and more of the body of sin which proves so heavy an incumbrance when he would have his soul full of fervent adoration of God.

10. *Humility* is another peculiar and most distinguishing part of the disposition of a Christian.—By his humility, is not meant his entertaining a worse opinion of himself or abasing himself lower than he really ought to do; but his living under a constant sense and acknowledgment of his own weakness, corruption, and sin, in the sight of God. All beside himself dissemble, and offend God in this matter. For though some confess their own weakness, they magnify their attainments, and overrate what they own to be the gift of God, because it belongs to themselves. They will not allow that after all they have done, and all they have received, their plea must still be this, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The Christian has learned better the poverty and sin of fallen man, even in his best estate. As the man who improves in learning, sees more of his own ignorance when he has made a considerable progress, than when he first began, so the Christian, the more he advances in the illumination of his mind, and in a clear view of the extent of his duty towards God, becomes more sensible of defects which had hitherto escaped his notice, and is humbled for them. "The commandment of God," he exclaims, "requires in every the minutest instance, that I do nothing forbidden by it, nor leave undone in heart or life, any one thing which it enjoins; that I should ever exercise a perfect regularity of affection and desire, and ever maintain a perfect rectitude of temper and of thought."—Having his eye fixed upon this purity, and acknowledging that God ought in this manner to be obeyed by every intelligent being, he clearly discerns his own innumerable failings, and his inherent depravity appears without a covering. Therefore, when in his deportment he is, in the eyes of men, unblameable and unprovable, and adorns the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things, it is still the sentiment of his heart, living and dying, that he has cause to implore forgiveness for his trespasses against God—crying out before him, "Behold, I am vile; enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Thus is the Christian preserved humble by his knowledge of the law; and no less so by the knowledge of the gospel. "Have my sins," he cries, "rendered me so abominable in the eyes of God, that it would reflect dishonor upon his Majesty to receive my prayers, or admit me to any share in his pardoning mercy upon a less consideration than the death and intercession of his own Son for me; and can I in this state regard myself as any thing better than a guilty sinner? Shall I presume upon my own holiness, as perfectly free from spots and defilement, when I am not permitted so much as to ask a pardon, without imploring mediation of the Redeemer, that I may be heard?" Thus deeply



laid is the foundation of Christian humility; a grace above all others, the very antidote to the first-born sin of man, and to every delusion of Satan. By this the Christian is made meet for that world where God is all in all; where the most exalted spirits maintain a perpetual sense of infinite distance from God and abase themselves before him continually, in the midst of all the transporting manifestations of glory they enjoy. "The four-and-twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne."—Rev. iv. 10.

These several particulars present those excellent tempers respecting God which rule and govern every real Christian. Now if you, who have heard this description, live destitute of any one of these dispositions towards God your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, here enumerated, you assume a character, in calling yourself a Christian, to which you have no Scriptural title. It is true these several dispositions are possessed in very different degrees by the several members of Christ's body, glowing in some with brighter lustre, in others with less, as one star differeth from another star in glory; yet the joint influence of them all is as essential to the very being of a real Christian, as the union of the soul and body is to the constitution of every individual man. And with as much propriety and truth may a lifeless corpse be called a member of society, as the soul which is void of any of these dispositions, be numbered amongst the members of the church of Christ. For what more monstrous can be conceived, than a Christian who has no fear of God; a Christian who pays no absolute submission to his authority; a Christian who is ungrateful, unbelieving, and altogether selfish; a Christian without love to God and Christ, without piety, without humility; take away one of these dispositions, and you deprive the soul of that which is a part of its spiritual life, and without which it must expire.

Examine, therefore, and prove yourself, whether you belong to Christ. "If a man say he hath faith, and hath not works," that is, the tempers by which only the influence and the power of faith can be discerned, "can that faith save him?" You may add or admit what you please in the character of one you choose to call a Christian; you may make him only a person devoted by a baptismal dedication to God; or one who gives his assent to this truth, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ that should come into the world; or one who worships among Christians;—but the only genuine standard of a Christian is the written word of God. Now this speaks aloud to men at all times, and in all ages: it makes no difference: it allows of no abatement: it affirms in the most positive manner, and affirms it in a variety of different expressions, that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. That "if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature;" his heart, once profane, now pays a supreme regard to God; is willing to obey and submit to him in every thing; seeks his honor and approbation; loves him in Christ Jesus, and delights continually in nearer and nearer approaches to him.

This, this only is the genuine character of a Christian, even were it not to be found in one of a million, nor in one of a nation. To delude yourself with notions and fancies, however popular, however supported by the great and learned, that you shall partake of the benefits of Christ in the eternal world, without being thus conformed to his precepts and example in this, is to make Christianity deservedly the jest of infidels, the scorn of all who can distinguish what is really excellent from a pompous useless profession. As you love therefore

the salvation of your own soul; as you would not be found a hypocrite in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; as you would not be the cause of infidels blaspheming that worthy name whereby you are called; O! take good heed to yourself, and see that for your own part you are found a worshipper of God in spirit and in truth; see that the most exact observer of your manners and tempers shall be forced, if he judge with candor, to confess that the name of God is great in your eyes, and his glory all your aim.

## SUNDAY XXIII.—CHAP. XXIII.

THE TEMPERS OF A CHRISTIAN TOWARDS HIS FELLOW-CREATURES—SINCERITY—JUSTICE.

THE Scripture teaches us that God has made all things for himself. Yet notwithstanding the supreme regard which the Lord Almighty ever bears to his own glory, he is so far from requiring any sort of homage from us which is detrimental to the interests of society, that it is impossible to please God, without exercising every benevolent temper towards man: for no parent ever more affectionately studied the happiness of his own offspring, or delighted in their harmony, than the Father of the spirits of all flesh delights in seeing us obey his great command, of loving one another without dissimulation.

And were the divine commands in this respect universally obeyed, the church of Christ would be a perfect picture of the heavenly world, one perpetual intercourse of brotherly kindness. It is, alas! too notorious, that few in comparison of professed believers have ever been subject to this law of love. Nevertheless, it is the noble peculiarity of a Christian to be found in the constant practice of those tempers which every man living would have others exercise towards himself; and to stand as much distinguished by the excellency of his deportment towards his fellow-creatures, as he does by his faith, devotion, and zeal towards God.

I shall therefore now make it my business to delineate those several lovely tempers by means of which the Christian proves an invaluable blessing to society. And with respect to each temper, I shall point out the Scriptural motives which excite and maintain its exercise.

May the God of Christians make this representation of their duty towards men effectual to convince every reader; that if he has at heart the welfare of society, it can only be promoted to the utmost, where the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ is sincerely embraced.

I. In delineating the tempers of a Christian towards his fellow-creatures I shall begin with that eminent one SINCERITY. As a Christian then, you will esteem it your duty, constantly to speak the truth, according to the information you have received, in all the affairs and occurrences of life.—You will lay a charge upon your conscience to give no commendations where you think they are not due; nor to flatter any as possessed of excellences which you see not in them; nor to speak as if you regarded them with peculiar respect, when you only design by this means to pay your court, to please the vanity of the human heart, or to deceive. For though in the commerce of the world, and amongst the refinements of the polite, this is valued as an accomplishment, it is, in fact, a horrid perversion of language, a piece of dissimulation which Christian simplicity abhors. And as sincerity will be conspicuous in all your conversation with respect to persons and things, so the same excellent temper will display its

influence with respect to all your promises and engagements. When you have bound yourself by a promise to do any good office, or confer any benefit, the right of the thing promised hath, in the court of conscience and before the God of truth, passed over from you to the person receiving the promise; wherefore you have, without his leave, no more power to recall or reverse it, than if you had given him a legal bond. Consequently you will esteem yourself obliged to stand to the performance of your word, though it may be much to your own prejudice. And this in every instance where you have made a promise, unless some conditions were specified which have not been fulfilled, or something afterwards has come to light, which annuls its obligation. Above all, you will show an inviolable attachment to sincerity when your testimony is required in a court of judicature, and in decision of matters of right. Here, divesting yourself of affection on the one hand, and prejudice on the other, you will explain the true state of the case, and represent every thing without disguise, as it has fallen under your notice.

In these several important particulars, and in all similar to them, you will pay a conscientious regard to sincerity. Your motives also will be distinct from those of the mere moralist, and infinitely more cogent. He may be an advocate for truth and sincerity, and would have all men practise it, because it is the cement of society, and the only foundation of mutual confidence. Feeble motives, alas! when opposed to the natural selfishness of man and to those violent temptations which assault the poor, indigent, and dependent, to obtain money and serve their private interest.

The consideration of the character of the great and glorious God, is, on the contrary, your encouragement and support, O Christian! in the exercise of this temper. He is himself the God of truth, and it is, you know, what he commands, and what he delights in. "These are the things that ye shall do," saith he, "Speak ye every man truth to his neighbor." Zech. viii. 16. The want of sincerity he stigmatises with reproach, and threatens every false tongue with eternal woe. In the character which your God gives of an heir of heaven, you are assured that he is one "that hateth lying," Prov. xiii. 5. that "speaketh the truth in his heart," Ps. xv. 2. "Lying lips," you read, "are an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xii. 22. A mark, that men "are of their father the devil and the lusts of their father they will do," John viii. 44. and that "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, shall be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Rev. xxi. 8.

In you, therefore, these motives will unite their force, namely, a desire to please God, and to dwell for ever in his presence, and a fear of despising his high and amiable authority, of incurring his severe displeasure, and the just punishment of everlasting misery. These motives will arm you so completely, that you can dread no evil sufficient to deter, nor meet with any bribe sufficient to allure you from the practice of sincerity. Add to this, that the Holy Ghost, which every true believer in Jesus Christ receives, is called the Spirit of truth; and his fruit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. It is impossible therefore to be a Christian, and at the same time to live under the dominion of a false and a deceitful tongue.

If your conscience therefore accuses you in this matter, O! cease to flatter yourself that you are in any degree righteous on account of all you may boast, or glory in beside. No; unless you abhor falsehood, and delight in sincerity and truth, be assured it is not making many prayers, it is not extolling the riches of free grace, or attempting to cover yourself with the robe of the Saviour's right-

eousness, that will either excuse or screen your abominable wickedness. On the contrary, if you can thus monstrosly abuse the grace of God, it only proves that your idea of him is infinitely despicable; that you conceive of him, as if he could be pleased with what would even kindle your own resentment, with deceitful compliment and unmeaning adulation; as if he would regard words or speculative notions, whilst in the weighty matters of his law, you set at nought his counsel. No; sincerity and truth are the very essence of Christian practice; and if you are a believer, you will eminently possess these shining qualities.

II. It is the temper of a Christian constantly to act towards his fellow-creatures with justice.—Has the providence of God placed you in some public situation, investing you with the dignity of a magistrate, a senator, or a judge? you will vigorously oppose oppression, and punish the oppressor; you will be active to put salutary laws in execution, to establish tranquillity, and promote peace; you will be mindful of God, the high ordainer of all civil government, to whom every one intrusted with the discharge of any part of it stands as strictly accountable as the steward to his master. What God so solemnly commands, will form your public character; "Thou shalt do no unrighteousness in judgment. Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." Lev. xix. 15. "He that ruleth over men," like the Prince of Peace, to whom the words primarily refer, "must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4.

Have you riches in such abundance as to create a numerous set of dependants? you will exercise Christian justice towards them all; you will scorn to grasp after the utmost farthing your estate can produce, till your tenants, wedded as it were to the place of their nativity, groan beneath the load of rents unreasonably advanced; you will perceive an inexpressible degree of injustice also in the fashionable custom of owing large sums for your furniture, equipage, and dress, whilst your tradesmen are almost at their wits end to pay for the things you call *your own*; whilst they are daily tortured with the dilemma of bankruptcy, if they recover not their debts; or of ruin through the cruel resentment of their opulent creditors if they do.

Your rule is positive and express, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another;" and the opposite practice, though punishable in the rich by no human law (except in extreme cases) is marked as the object of God's abhorrence, and the certain way to fall under the severity of his displeasure. "Behold, the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton." James v. 4, 5. The application of this Scripture, from the day-laborer to every person in trade, whose money is unreasonably withheld, will be obvious and effectual to you, who regard the reproofs of God in his holy word.

But are you occupied yourself in trade or merchandise, then the energy of your Christian principles will show themselves in a still stronger light. You will not suffer the love of money to bias or corrupt your conscience. You will take no advantage either of the ignorance or necessity of those with whom you traffic, by putting bad things into their hands for good, or by exacting an exorbitant price. You will neither take, nor use, nor detain



through force or fraud, what is your neighbor's property.

Now if any one should say, it is not possible to live so honestly in the present state of the world: that the righteous man, by dealing so conscientiously in the midst of those who have no conscience, would make himself a prey, and therefore must either leave his trade, or starve in it; I answer, that violent as the temptations, and plausible as the pleas are, to conform to general custom, in conniving at breaches of honesty, and in living upon the wages of iniquity; yet, the motives for you to be punctually just and righteous in all your dealings, if you have any title to the character of a Christian, must still preponderate. For (whatever is the case with others, who have never received the word of God in deed and in truth) you know how express and peremptory the command of your God is in this matter. You know that God, who indispensably requires you to be honest, leaves no foundation for the worldly infidel's excuses constantly urged to palliate cheating, *viz.* the necessity of being dishonest in order to prosper; for he pledges his own most sacred word for your provision, if you will deal uprightly. Thus saith the Lord, the most high God, governor of heaven and earth, "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small," that is, one to buy and another to sell with. "Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord thy God." Deut. xxv. 13—16. You hear him expressing his abhorrence of the iniquity, so customary in trade, in the most alarming manner: "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure, that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof hath spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins." Micah vi. 10—13.

Should it be supposed that regard for yourself and family will gain the ascendancy, and be prompting you to use common arts of fraud; I answer, that even this pressing temptation will be counteracted by the unalterable declarations of your God; "Woe unto him that buildeth his house with unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong." Jer. xxii. 13. "Be not deceived: the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. vi. 9. Besides, the Lord that bought you with his own blood, and from whose grace you alone expect the gift of salvation, has commanded you to conform in your whole conduct to the following rule: "Therefore, all things whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them, for this is the law and the prophets."

Were you therefore, after these full instructions, which you receive as the irrevocable righteous decrees of the Almighty; were you to do any thing unjustly, you know you must renounce both the authority of God, and your interest in the redemption which is in Jesus. You know, that in the very day you determine to follow the evil customs of the world in this point, you must bid farewell to all solid peace of conscience, forfeit that delightful communion with God, which has been the sweetest enjoyment of your life, and give up the pleasing expectation of a blessed immortality, for remorse, for fear, or, what is worse, for a conscience past feeling.

Comparing, therefore, things spiritual with things temporal, you will determine that honesty is always the best policy. And though you know that injustice and fraud hold such a large dominion over the world, that you may "run to and fro through the streets, and seek to find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment;" yet, unseduced and uncorrupted by the multitude of sinners, you will pity those who purchase gain at the expense of their integrity. Surely, you will say, "They have made their faces harder than a rock. Surely, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God." Jer. v. 3, 4.

Further, Do you preside in a family? you will then regard it as a grand branch of your Christian duty to give unto your servants that which is just and equal. You will not treat them with haughtiness, because of their dependent state: you will falsify no contract you have engaged in with them, nor withhold their wages which are due: you will make a conscience of not exacting from them harder labor than they are well able to perform. In case of slight misdemeanors, you will not provoke them with threatenings, nor gall them with words of abuse; nor when you observe them faithful in your service, be backward to give them suitable encouragement. Above all, you will abhor that custom which is an indelible reproach to a civilized, much less to a Christian country, of abandoning them in the time of their sickness, and through fear of paying for their cure, turning them out without money, without friends, when their condition loudly calls for medicine, for attendance, for compassion towards them.

The command of your God respecting the justice due from masters to their servants is most express, and the care he has taken to procure for them a benevolent regard from all who reverence his authority, is very remarkable. You hear him in their behalf, thus addressing you: "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy—lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it be sin unto thee." Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. You are assured that the God of heaven and earth, like an impartial loving Father, equally resents the wrong done to any of his offspring; and with him is no respect of persons. The knowledge of this will lead you to regard your domestic dependants in a respectful light; it will lead you to repress the emotions of a selfish hasty spirit, as the faithful Job was wont to do: "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me:" that is, if in any matter of debate betwixt them and myself, I paid little regard to justice, condemning and accusing them when guiltless, or treating them with harshness because in my power; "What shall I then do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?" Job xxxi. 13—15. Thus the awful thought that you have a Master in heaven, will regulate your deportment towards your fellow-creatures, over whom his providence has given you authority.

So essential to the character of a real Christian is this part of justice which is due from all masters to their servants, that whosoever lives in the violation of this duty, does but expose himself and the faith of Jesus to derision, by pretending regard for it. For what can be more contemptible, what more odious, than for a man pretending to be a follower of Jesus, who is a lion in his house, and frantic towards his servants? One of the most melancholy objects on earth is a passionate governor of a family, calling himself a believer, and valuing himself on his relation to Christ. All the servants who are connected with him, and all who observe his car-

riage towards them, will be led to despise and to revile that religion which they see joined with such loathsome hypocrisy. From regard, therefore, to the name and gospel of Jesus, that it may not through you be blasphemed, as well as from a sense of interest, and a love to the commands of your Saviour, you, O Christian! will give no occasion for your servants to complain of your unjust deportment towards them.

But if, instead of the place of authority and government, the all-wise God has fixed you in that of subjection, as a servant or an apprentice, you will faithfully follow the directions which the Scripture gives you for the exercise of justice in that condition of life. You will abhor the thought of wasting, embezzling or secreting to your own use any of your master's money, goods, or provisions. You will neither do this yourself, nor basely connive at others who are wicked enough to do it. You will not see things spoiled before your eyes; nor give away to tattlers and busy bodies what is not your own to give. You will not be idle and slothful, because those are absent who are to overlook you and force you to diligence. You will think it your duty to consult the interest of your master, and to make it in some sense your own.

The motives which influence you, if you have any title to be called a Christian, to do so much more in this respect than it is common to find other servants doing, are peculiar and mighty in operation. You will act thus from a principle of conscience, concerned to be approved by God in your behavior, and determined to do nothing knowingly and wilfully that is offensive to him, whether any besides himself are present to observe you or not. From a desire also to adorn and recommend to others that gospel of which you know the excellency, you will be uniform in the practice of honesty and justice. In this substantial manner you will evidence that your faith is more than a barren notion; by proving that it makes you worthy of all the confidence your master can place in you, and that it preserves you from falling into those lies or frauds so generally the practice of servants in almost every family. This conscientious honesty you will regard as one of the most substantial proofs that you know God. You will judge that your master must necessarily mock at your religion, and with justice too, however zealous you may seem, if he should find that you pilfer as others, and that you are not to be trusted when removed from his inspection.

Now, whatever opposition and hatred you may incur by such conscientious deportment, you will patiently endure; assured that in doing your duty in this manner, and upon these principles, you shall receive from God the reward of an everlasting inheritance. And though the value of your services, or the things in which you discover your integrity, be little in the judgment of the world; you know they shall witness for you, that you were faithful and obedient; and, like the widow's mite, be as much in the sight of God as greater services. Since he, where there is a willing mind, accepteth according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

But lest such promises should not alone prove sufficient to animate you to the practice of justice, you know from the infallible word of God, that no fraud, however common, however slightly thought of, either in wasting your master's substance, or neglecting his business, much less in purloining his goods, if persisted in, will be overlooked; that "every one that doth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he doth," whether poor or rich, master or servant.

Another important instance, in which every real

Christian manifests his impartial love of justice, is by paying those customs which are by law enacted, and from thence become his earthly sovereign's right. This very thing is expressly mentioned and enjoined by the command of your God. You are to "give tribute to whom tribute, and custom to whom custom is due." Besides this most express command, you have the example of your Redeemer. When he had neither silver nor gold, he wrought a miracle that he might pay the tribute exacted of him and his poor disciple. He did this rather than seem to countenance the iniquity of defrauding the crown of its just revenues. You will therefore renounce the custom too common in trade, of attempting either to bribe the king's officers to betray their trust, or of deceiving their utmost vigilance. You will renounce such practices as utterly irreconcilable with any regard to Christian duty.

The last instance of justice which I shall insist on, is that of restitution to all whom you have wilfully injured, either in their souls or their bodies, their estate or reputation. Have you led any friend or acquaintance into error, or tempted them to sin? Have you solicited and obtained their compliance to some base and guilty practice? The first step you will necessarily take, when you yourself repent and believe in Jesus, will be to endeavor to recover from danger your companions in iniquity, and, as far as lieth in you, to make them sensible of the crimes in which you have shared, alas! so deeply with them. In case you have defrauded any one, you will (like Zaccheus upon his first receiving the Saviour) make what restitution you are able; esteeming it a baseness provoking in the sight of God and man, to live yourself in superfluities, whilst others are suffering loss through your former injustice. All evidences of the truth of your faith you must esteem utterly deceitful, if you can enjoy the spoils of which you have defrauded your neighbor.

Further, as a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, if at any time, through private resentment or licentiousness of speech, you have been either the inventor or propagator of falsehood to the injury of your neighbor; you will think it a part of justice to make a particular retraction of the calumny you advanced, and openly acknowledge the particular aggravations which you have forged. For though it may be prejudicial to your own reputation thus to point out the truth; though it may make the world abate the esteem they at present have for you; this esteem belongs not to you, but to the person you have injured; and to him you must return it, though you expose yourself. For however mortifying this procedure may appear, it is absolutely necessary; and it is the only proof that you repent and abhor the falsehood and licentiousness of your tongue.

#### SUNDAY XXIV.—CHAP. XXIV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—MERCY—MEEKNESS.

Of *sincerity* and *justice*, as essentially requisite in the character of a Christian, we have already spoken. These virtues, when practised in the degree in which they have been here explained, are too often thought to comprehend all that can be required of man. It must, however, be remembered, that these are but the least considerable of the branches which spring from the root of faith in Christ. Where this root is fixed in the heart, such negative righteousness towards men will in no wise be deemed sufficient, nor will you rest satisfied with bare freedom from wilfully injuring, or deceiving any of your fellow-creatures; on the con-



trary, to the conscientious observance of truth and justice, you will add,

III. *The love and practice of MERCY.* Whenever the providence of God places the miserable before your eyes, as it did of old the wounded traveller before the priest and Levite, you will be moved to compassion. Their pains and diseases of body, their troubles and distresses of mind, their necessitous circumstances, their unjust sufferings from others, and even the miseries brought upon themselves by their own iniquity, will excite in you a fellow-feeling for them. So that if you have much, such objects will receive liberal relief from your bounty. After the example of Job, because actuated by the same spirit, you will become, in the distribution of your alms, eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the afflicted poor. The blessing of him that was ready to perish will daily come upon you, and you will make the widow's heart to leap for joy.

But if you are not in circumstances to give plentifully, still the temper of your heart will be no less friendly and charitable than if you were.—Though poor, your bowels will yearn towards the distressed; and though you have neither bread of your own to bestow on the hungry, nor know where to make applications for their relief, there still remains one way in which your merciful disposition will evidence itself; a way pleasing to God, and profitable to men; you will make your intercession to the Father of all mercies and the God of all consolation, to put an end to their afflictions, or to support them under their pressure.

Further, you will exercise mercy, if you are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ towards those, whom either the injuries they have done you, or the debts for which they stand answerable, have put in your power to punish. In such cases, where mercy to the wretched individual would not prove a barbarous lenity to the community in general, you will relax in your demands, and waive the rigorous execution of the law. More especially, and without exception, where the appointments of God's providence have disabled those indebted to you from answering your legal demands, you will abhor the thought of afflicting him whom God hath wounded. You will reject with indignation the worldly maxim of seeking some sort of satisfaction in lieu of your debt, by causing the man by whom you suffer to lie in a jail. For the same reason, you will in all cases where the innocent must suffer with the guilty, choose rather to be a sufferer in some degree yourself, than bring many, for the fault of one, into misery, by taking away the support of a whole family.

Besides these cases, there is one in which a Christian's merciful temper shines with the greatest lustre; I mean in tenderly regarding the spiritual miseries and dangers of the human race. It is, I confess, generous and noble to alleviate and remove the sufferings of the body, and to take a pleasure in doing good to them who are in adversity, by liberal gifts. Yet how limited, how partial, how transient are the benefits! What can alms avail to comfort, where every distemper of the mind still rages? Pride, envy, hatred, wrath, malice, strife and filthy lewdness in families, destroy all good, all enjoyment of comfort. You relieve the family day by day, but the husband abuses his wife, beats and terrifies his children; or the proud imperious wife vexes her husband, driving him into drunkenness as a refuge from her assaults; or the children, after the bad example they see at home, grow in wickedness as in stature, to do mischief and increase the guilt and wretchedness of the world by their evil tempers. In every station and walk of life, immortal souls are provoking their adorable Maker and Benefactor to jealousy; spurning at his counsel and

his salvation, and heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. These are the great objects which, louder than even widows or orphans, call for mercy, and the most active exertions of our pity. These things will awaken a lively pity in your heart, if you are a Christian in truth. You cannot without a tender sorrow, see immortal souls provoking the great God to jealousy, spurning the offers of his salvation, and heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. As you firmly believe all the realities of the invisible world, you must be much affected with such a melancholy spectacle; "I beheld," you will say, "the transgressors, and I was grieved because men kept not thy law."

And this compassion to the souls of men will inspire you with activity and zeal to save them from ruin. You will labor to turn sinners from the error of their ways, by private entreaties and winning persuasions, by faithful and strong declarations of their danger, where there is any opportunity of speaking, any ear to hear, or lucid interval of reflection in the wicked; by distributing heart-searching books, and by assisting those that are engaged in the important work of spreading the knowledge of the Lord.

If you ask, what is there peculiar to the real Christian, by which a disposition so extensively merciful is excited and maintained? I answer, the reverence he pays to the command of God, and the full persuasion he enjoys of the truth of his promises; but still more, the sense he has of his own redemption by Christ, and the agency of the Holy Ghost on his heart.

The command of God to be merciful, is most express and frequent; "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren—thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him. Beware that thine eye be not evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him." Deut. xv. 7—10. In every description of the tempers God enjoins us to show to our fellow-creatures, mercy bears a very distinguished part. "He hath shown thee O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah vi. 8. In his estimate, pure and undefiled religion, as it respects our fellow-creatures, is to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction. No duty is more frequently urged than this; "Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father also is merciful." Luke vi. 36. "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another." 1 Pet. iii. 8.

And as these commands of God prove the necessity of a merciful temper in all that are approved by him, so do his repeated promises invite and encourage the Christian to the practice of it. For though none of these promises imply any worth in a merciful temper where it subsists together with love to sin, or enmity to the cross of Christ; though they are not to be construed as if mercy would be rewarded independently of faith in the Redeemer: yet are they of great efficacy to remove the objections which are generally made by our worldly hearts against the exercise of love and bounty; since they so fully assure us, that all acts of beneficence which spring from faith, from love to God, and an obedient heart, are well-pleasing to him, and shall be honored through his grace with an immense reward. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Matt. v. 7. "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." James v. 20. "A new commandment I give

unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 34, 35. Add to this, that astonishing declaration of the Redeemer's regard to this excellent temper, even from his throne of judgment, and in the presence of the whole universe. He will then reward every exercise of mercy, as if it had been conferred immediately on himself; as if the afflictions it relieved had been sustained in his own person; as if he alone had received benefit and consolation from it; "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. xxv. 40.

But still beyond the force even of these forcible precepts and promises, your own sense of redemption by the blood of the cross, will excite and maintain in you a readiness and delight in every kind of mercy. You remember your apostasy from God to have been such, by natural disposition, and to have been so confirmed by practice, that it would have been just had God destroyed you both body and soul in hell. But instead of this insupportable doom, you, O Christian! know that God, "commended his love towards us, in that whilst we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us*." An instance of mercy absolutely without a parallel, both in itself and in its beneficial efficacy to the church of God. This you know is the only foundation of your peace and hope; this is all your salvation, and all your desire. In consequence of your living under affecting views of such transcendent grace, by which you are reconciled to God and made his heir, the love of Christ will constrain you; with a pleasing energy it will urge you to all the various exercises of brotherly-kindness and charity. A delightful emotion of mind, resulting from these views, peculiar to the faithful, will lead you, even without an immediate regard either to the command or promises of God, to this practical conclusion, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." 1 John iv. 11.

Further; besides these awful commands, and these inviting promises, besides the warmth and strength of God's mercy towards men, manifested in the death of Jesus, the mighty influence also of the Holy Ghost is promised to dwell with the Christian. By his agency, through means of the motives offered in the written word, he is delivered from the unfeeling selfishness or the partial good-will natural to the human heart. For the fruit of that Spirit which distinguishes and infinitely ennobles every true believer in Jesus, is expressly affirmed to be love, and to be "in all goodness."

*Fourthly*, MEEKNESS is an essential branch of the Christian temper. If you are a believer in Jesus, you will not hastily take offence, or yield to the suggestions of pride and self-love. A trivial injury, a reproachful word, a small indiscretion, or a casual loss, will not inflame your mind. Nay, supposing you are tried by some great provocation, you will watch over your own selfish spirit, with a godly jealousy; lest you should be hurried into passion by ill usage, or drawn by the misconduct of others to dishonor your holy profession, to bring guilt upon your own soul, and grieve the spirit of God. Even when you suffer such considerable injuries, that you have a right to seek redress, and ought not to sit down easy under them, you will still exercise meekness. You will first use every mild method to bring, if possible, your adversary to reason. You will be disposed to try arguments before punishment, conference before law, and private admonition before you proceed to make a public example. And, if at length your own security, or the common good compels you to seek relief

from the execution of public justice, even this will be done by you with calmness, without passionate exclamations, or bitter reflections upon your enemy.

Further, you must, as a real Christian, show the meekness of your spirit, by carefully avoiding just cause of offence to others. For this excellent grace does not more effectually support under provocations, than enable men to deny their own inclinations rather than give uneasiness. It will make you cautious, that neither your words nor actions carry with them any provocation. You will not be overbearing in company, nor positive and warm in asserting your own opinion and sense of things.—You will be civil and respectful to every one. Men generally know how to do all this where they think it necessary to serve their temporal interests: from better principles and from higher views you will make it the habitual exercise of your life towards every one.

And to mention no more instances in which your Christian meekness will eminently discover itself, you will show that you are under the government of this temper in the matter of religion. Instead of overflowing with the gall of bitterness against those who depart from the undoubted essentials of Christianity, you will endeavor their recovery by calmly producing the strongest arguments in demonstration of the truth; and by cordially praying they may have understanding and a sincere heart to perceive their force. You will abhor the thought of covering your private resentment with the venerable name of zeal for God's glory and for the good of man.—You will not think that contempt of your erring brother, or passion against him, can be justified by any means or on any account whatsoever. Therefore, though it is so common for those who call themselves Christians, to vent their rage against the adversaries of our most holy faith, you "in meekness" will instruct "those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. ii. 25.

Thus extensive is the grace of meekness, that eminent branch of the Christian temper, as it respects our fellow-creatures.

Now the peculiar motives which will excite and support its exercise in your heart, if you are a Christian, are such as the philosophers of old, and their unbelieving successors at this day know nothing of, though in both there has often been a resemblance of this amiable temper. You will not be meek, from a love of ease, which leads some to submit to the ill humors of others, rather than bear the trouble of contention, and by which they gain the credit of sweetness of temper, or from a proud disdain of appearing to be hurt by malice, or perverseness, which would imply a feebleness and weakness in your own mind: but you will be meek, because this is the will of God concerning you. He commands you to "be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." Tit. iii. 2. "To put off anger, wrath, hatred, variance, emulation, and strife: and to put on kindness, meekness, and long-suffering." Your Saviour, the foundation of all your hope and access to God with confidence, denounces a severe threatening against every sally of unbridled passion; "Whosoever," says he, "is angry with his brother without a cause," that is, through a selfish passionate spirit, "shall be in danger of the judgment," that is, shall fall under the anger of God; "and whosoever shall say to him, Raca," or thou worthless fellow, suffering himself to mock and deride others, shall be still more severely punished, "shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool," that is, shall allow himself to be so far transported by his passion as to revile another, to represent him not



only as fit to be despised, but even to be abhorred, he shall meet with still sorer punishment; "he shall be in danger of hell-fire." So awful are the sanctions by which you, O Christian, are called upon to watch against every violation of meekness, and to look upon passion as one of the worst enemies to your soul. Besides the express and repeated command of God proving the absolute necessity of meekness, such honor is put upon this grace as must make it the ambition of every Christian to possess it; "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Prov. xvi. 32. The meek are pronounced blessed, and the inheritance of the good land, wherein dwelleth righteousness, is promised to them. Matt. v. 5. Meekness is distinguished as the principal ornament of a Christian, and honored above every encomium, as being of great price in the sight of God.

Added to all these motives there is one still more powerful, the astonishing meekness of that adorable person, the Author and Finisher of our salvation. The inspired writers always remind us of this great pattern, and fix our attention on the cross of Christ, when they would make us sensible of the hatefulness of an impetuous, quarrelsome, or angry temper. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that he might bring us to God." Eph. iv. 31, 32. He, your Lord and Master, was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. I must go, therefore, you will say, and implore grace from God to imitate this perfect pattern; since it is written, "He that saith he abideth in him," that is, in Christ, "ought himself also to walk even as he walked." 1 John ii. 6.

A still more effectual mean than any yet named, which disposes every real Christian to the exercise of meekness, is what has passed in his own heart. Self-abasement and shame for sin are inseparable from repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ. A kind of knowledge this, which greatly subdues haughtiness of spirit; and by so doing makes it easy to pass by those provocations, which set the proud and self-adorning in a flame. As persons who have committed some enormous crime, when truly penitent, find no resentment of passion, whatever is said of them, or whatever is done to them; so to your heart when humbled for your sin before God, this thought will readily occur, under every provocation to wrath, "Of far worse treatment am I deserving, and of much severer trial of my patience."

This powerful inducement to suppress all sinful anger, and prevent every violation of the law of meekness, St. Paul urges in its full force. He founds his exhortations solely on the sinful state in which we are all by nature involved, as every true believer in Christ most clearly knows. "Put them in mind," says he, "to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves, also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Titus iii. 2-3.

As you make a progress in the knowledge and practice of your religion, fresh evidences of your own corruption will discover themselves in your heart, and prove so many repeated admonitions to pray for and exercise meekness, knowing with what

rich forbearance God endures the multitude of your own failings. For though the dominion of sin is destroyed, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit still remains, and consequently sufficient matter for humbling yourself till mortality is swallowed up of life.

## SUNDAY XXV.—CHAP. XXV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—CANDOR—FORGIVENESS OF ENEMIES—HUMILITY.

In delineating the character of a real Christian, as it respects the tempers he exercises towards his fellow-creatures, we have already described him as sincere and just in all his dealings, as merciful and kind towards all men, meek and patient under all provocations. But besides these, other graces are still requisite to complete his character. These I proceed to enumerate.

V. CANDOR is an essential branch of the Christian temper: it discovers itself by the charitable judgment which it passes on the actions, the characters, and the intentions of our fellow-creatures.

By their actions you are not to understand such as are plainly condemned in the word of God, and declared positively to expose men to the wrath of God: because so far is it from any act of charity to strengthen the drunkard or the fornicator, the fraudulent or liar, the covetous, the profane or the careless, by flattering them, or leaving them to flatter themselves that they shall escape for their wickedness, unless they become new creatures, that it is joining with their invisible adversary the devil, and giving him your aid to delude their souls till they are lost for ever. But besides the multitude of evil actions and tempers, distinguished in Scripture by the name of sins, which go before men to judgment, there is a considerable part of human conduct of a doubtful aspect. Now here is the peculiar province for the exercise of charitable judgment: and in this place, O Christian, you will esteem it your bounden duty, and make it your practice. You will watch over your tongue, to restrain it from condemning men without proofs, or merely upon the slight evidence of a single report. You will be careful to inform yourself of the particular circumstances connected with the action in question; and when no sufficient light appears to justify a peremptory verdict, you will conclude as candor and love direct. Thus in the numberless quarrels between near relations, and in contests about matters of property, it is common to hear violent accusations which have no foundation, and plausible misrepresentations of each other by both the parties concerned. In the midst of which very few can know any thing with certainty, and therefore all are bound to suspend their judgment, and receive no ill impressions from common fame.

With regard also to the characters of men, you will be charitable in your judgment. The commission of a single crime contrary to the tenor of the delinquent's life, you will never cruelly construe into an impeachment of his sincerity. You will not brand a man as an incorrigible villain ever after, because he was once guilty of a dishonest action towards yourself; or proclaim another to be a mere hypocrite in religion, because you have once detected him in some wicked practice. You will not immediately, as the manner of a vindictive man is, cry out, that all pretence of conscience in such is only cant, or profession of the fear of God only a snare to entrap the simple, or a cloak to cover iniquity. On the contrary, you will remember how often the violence of temptation, suited to your constitutional sin, has been too mighty for you, or

brought you to the very point of yielding. You will call to mind, that the best of men, those whom God himself has canonized as saints in glory, did not always persevere in the path of duty, without a blemish or a fall: they were overtaken with faults, though they soon abhorred themselves for them, and vanquished for the future their attempts. You will acknowledge it very possible for such frail creatures as men are, in their best state, to make a slip contrary to habitual practice and acknowledged duty.

Fair evidences therefore of repentance will demand in your opinion a favorable judgment of those who have dishonored their Christian profession; and lead you to conclude, that inward shame and secret sorrow for their fall, have exceeded all the open reproach, which, as backsliders, they have brought upon themselves and religion.

With regard to the intentions of men, as in most cases they can with certainty be known to God only, you will esteem it your bounden duty to impute no evil, where it is not manifest, nor dare to allow the injurious surmise that such and such things spring from a bad design, when you have no proof to ascertain the charge.

In these, and in many other similar points, you will exercise a charitable judgment, because the command of your God and Saviour is most plain that you should, "Judge not," (that is, in cases where you cannot have a competent knowledge, and where God's law is silent,) "that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt. vii. 1, 2.

Your obedience to this command will appear most reasonable, and be made easy by the witness in your own heart. You are conscious how often you yourself when you have acted uprightly have been charged with evil intentions. Your own conduct has often been cruelly misconstrued, often condemned as being of quite another complexion than what you knew it to have been. You remember also how often you have done what you ought not, what you promised and vowed you would not: that many prayers, much watchfulness, and obstinate conflicts were scarcely sufficient to gain you an established victory over your own wickedness. You know that when you fell, the fall was instantly lamented; and though in fact wounded grievously, you rose to renew the combat, earnestly striving to obtain deliverance from the power of your adversary. Therefore, though you may be now a conqueror in the fight, you will feel for others in the situation in which you were once yourself; assured that men may really design the glory of God, and be in general influenced by good-will to their fellow-creatures, though they may sometimes be betrayed into a breach of duty.

Such sentiments, deeply impressed on your own heart, will form a habit of judging of your fellow-creatures with tenderness and mercy.

VI. It is a very distinguishing part of the temper of a real Christian, *to forgive and love his enemies*. Therefore, if you are entitled to the name you bear, your behavior under provocations will be quite opposite to the custom of the world, and the impulse of corrupt nature. Is your character basely vilified? you will refute the malicious slander, should it need an answer, without retaliating abuse for abuse, or blackening you defamers. Should your foes proceed from ill language to ill usage, you will still forgive; and prove the reality of your good-will towards them, by pitying them in their distress, by even serving them as occasion offers. And though in some cases the very grievous wrongs with which you may be oppressed, may justify and demand legal redress, your heart will burn with no animosity

against those, whose violence has forced you to this method of self-defence. And to advance still one step higher, were the case ever to happen that you should be left in the power of bloody persecutors, of the faith, who are determined, unless you will renounce it, to take away your life, yet even here, so sublime is the holiness flowing from Christian principles, you would feel a love of benevolence towards your persecutors. You would pray for them to that God, before whom it is equally dangerous and impious to dissemble. You would entreat him to give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that their sin may be pardoned, and the joy of heaven finally become their portion.

Thus complete is the nature, and thus wide the extent of the forgiveness and love which you will exercise, O Christian, towards your enemies.

The arguments which convince you of the reasonableness and absolute necessity of this temper, are, as they need to be, remarkably strong and impressive. Your knowledge of God in his government and redemption of the world, will lead you utterly to condemn and to oppose the first risings of malice, or of hatred even against your bitterest foes. For you are thoroughly sensible what manner of affronts and insults the great God daily receives.—You consider the condition of the persons who offer them, and the obligations they are under to him.—You remember the glory of the Most High, the ample means he has in his power instantly to avenge his injured name, and to destroy its daring adversaries in a moment.—At the same time you behold him slow to anger, full of long-suffering, and of great mercy; not willing that any should perish, but waiting for many months, nay, many years, in patient compassion towards them that hate him.

This adorable temper in the God of heaven, so conspicuous in his providential government of the world, shines still brighter to your mind in the plan of man's redemption. By serious meditation on this scheme, you will be led, O Christian, to reason thus with yourself; "Had God been provoked with his enemies, as I am so impatiently inclined to be with mine; had he been prone to resentment, or wanting in the riches of mercy, what had become of us all? of a world in arms against him? Had God loved those only who first loved him, or waited to give his inestimable blessing, till we sinners had made the first advance, where had been the means of grace? where the glad tidings of salvation?—God, on the contrary commended his love to us, 'in that when we were yet enemies Christ died for us.' How inexcusable then, how desperately wicked must it be in me, to want love for a fellow-servant, though a fellow-sinner, since God has had so much compassion on us all."

Further, the force of this argument in proof of the reasonableness of loving your enemies is still considerably more increased by your own experience, of God's grace and tender mercy to yourself.

You remember how long you lived in forgetfulness and in horrid contempt of God, as if you had been independent of him, or he unworthy of your notice; how long you were seeking your happiness in the pursuits of vanity, without inquiring, Where is God my Maker? You know he suffered you to survive all this insolence of affront to him. In the midst of it, his mercy was not estranged from you; he still protected, still provided for you; he preserved you from dying in a reprobate condition.—At length he crowned his goodness towards you, by giving you grace to see your sin and Saviour, by forgiving and forgetting all the evil you had done against him. This very long, this very gracious indulgence of your heavenly Father, manifests the hideous deformity of a vindictive spirit, and enables you to see how monstrous it must be in you to listen



to its dictates; or not to return love, whatever injuries you have received, when the God of glory both has dealt, and still continues to deal so graciously with you.

Therefore, though some violent provocations may suddenly kindle resentment, and prompt you to cherish the thought of returning evil for evil, soon the sensibility of God's patience and love towards yourself, will make the transient intention appear full of injustice and ingratitude to God, and totally unbecoming your guilty state before him. Thus the hell-engendered spark of revenge will quickly die away, and love instead of resentment reign within.

Besides these arguments, the full credit which you, O Christian, give to every Scripture declaration will dispose you to resist every rising sentiment of ill will against your enemies. You are assured by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that no one who harbors the least degree of malice or hatred in his heart, can stand within the limits of mercy till that detestable spirit is subdued. So highly offensive is it to God, whenever found in such guilty sinful creatures as we are, that it renders us incapable even of praying, without increasing our sin; for the tongue which holds any correspondence with a heart envenomed by hatred, does but call for a curse, when it calls upon God in those words which Christ has taught us, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" the man who does not forgive his enemies, calls in these words for justice on himself instead of compassion. The petition dreadfully inverted, sounds thus in the ears of God, "Forgive *not* me my trespasses, as I do *not* forgive them that trespass against me." And if any man persist in hatred of his foes, God will answer him according to this true meaning of his prayer.

In such a forcible manner are you taught, O Christian, to forgive and love your enemies. And whilst these considerations prove to you beyond question both the reasonableness and the absolute necessity of the duty, the grace of God is promised to your prayer, that, what with man is impossible, may, through the Spirit's influence, be accomplished by you. For though injuries so affect, so irritate our selfish hearts, that it seems an impracticable task to attempt to extinguish animosity towards our foes, yet by the Holy Ghost there is given to every true believer in Christ, "a spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind;" so that, through Christ strengthening him, he can do all things.

VII. By continuing in the faith of Christ, and growing in his grace, you will at length obtain true humility, "preferring every one before yourself." This indeed is the crowning attainment of a real Christian. An attainment not barely surpassing what the world thinks requisite to form a complete character, but even appearing to the proud big with absurdity and contradiction. I shall show therefore in what sense, and on what account, you will prefer every one before yourself, if you are advanced in Christian holiness. You will do this, not because you know yourself to live in the indulgence of sin as much as others; for irresistible evidence compels you to believe the contrary. Neither does this preference which you give to every one before yourself, imply any denial of the real change wrought in your soul by the grace of God; much less does it suppose that you might as well have continued, like the world at large, in servitude to sin. Were it so understood, I should allow the objections made against this part of the Christian temper, by men of superficial virtue and predominant self-conceit.—Then indeed it might justly be said, "Is it possible to be so blind as not to perceive the vast difference there is in the characters of men? And if I am allowed to see it in regard of others, how can it be

wrong to acknowledge as much with regard to my self? What violence should I offer to my reason, to attempt to persuade myself that I am not to prefer myself to the children of disobedience; I who pay regard to God and to all his commandments?"

But let the case be properly stated, and then I trust there will appear very sufficient grounds for this humble estimation of yourself.

It is certain then, if you are much advanced in the knowledge and practice of the religion of Jesus, that you are sensible of much corruption in your heart; for to imagine otherwise, is the effect of pride reigning and blinding the eyes of the mind.—It is certain, also, that you are conscious of many instances of unfaithfulness to the grace you have received; that you have to bewail many known omissions, and much negligence in the service of God; and that you cannot but acknowledge your tempers to have been far short of that perfection which the Christian purity requires. At the same time, you clearly perceive what excellent advantages you have enjoyed, what mercies have been granted to you, demanding suitable returns of faith, love, and obedience. You remember the alarming calls, the affectionate warnings, which have made strong impressions on your heart; the answers which have been given to your prayers; the troubles, the dangers, the enemies from which you have been delivered; together with the peace, the comfort, and joy you have so often experienced, in communion with your God. In a word, you are fully convinced, that much, very much indeed, has been done for you, to make you a shining pattern of holiness. In this view, therefore, every appearance of insensibility towards God; every secret sinful disorder of your affections, which, with many who account themselves religious, passes for nothing, will wear a quite different aspect in your eye—it will afflict and abase you.

Things being thus circumstanced with the humbled and advanced Christian; I would now ask, Where is the palpable absurdity, where the fancied impossibility, that each person of this character should judge himself, all things considered, inferior to other men? or that he should believe there is no other person, who, had he been blessed with equal helps and advantages, would not have so adorned his Christian profession as to surpass his attainments?

The whole difficulty of conceiving that this temper can actually subsist in the heart, arises from the self-conceit so general and abounding, which is puffed with the least shadow of supposed pre-eminence above others. This hateful disposition it is which makes men so apt to prefer themselves to others on account of their own goodness, without considering how much more favored they have been, and without comparing the progress they have made with the means of improvement they have enjoyed.

The advanced Christian is of a more humble and reasonable mind: he blushes at his manifold and great defects; he is ashamed for his faults in the remembrance of the rich grace of God bestowed upon him, and the consideration of the excellency of his majesty. He is too candid to think that others have been guilty in the same degree; the transition then is easy to prefer every one before himself.

Besides this inward testimony, which will lead you, if you are much advanced in the religion of Jesus, to this humble estimation of yourself, the command is positive; "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." Phil. ii. 3. A command expressly enjoined, as the only effectual prevention of "vain glory." And that this admonition is not to be interpreted as relating to those only who walk worthy of their Christian profession, appears evidently from the parable

which our Saviour spake on purpose to expose the sin of valuing ourselves above any one. He sets before our eyes a Pharisee and a Publican.—The former is a man honest, strictly conscientious, and very devout. These his virtues he acknowledges to be the free gifts of God; and he only prefers himself on their account to the wicked and abandoned. One of them he mentions in his prayer, without any personal aversion, merely because he saw him in the temple, and thanks his God that he was not so wicked and base as this Publican. You know the judgment of God in this case. The Pharisee was left in his sins, highly offensive in the eye of his Maker, because he exalted himself above the Publican. "Because," says our Lord, "he trusted in himself that he was righteous, and despised others," that is, in comparison of himself.

A fuller proof you cannot desire of the necessity of entertaining the lowest opinion of yourself. This example therefore will lead you, O Christian, to understand, that all who prefer themselves to others, adopt, in fact, the sentiments of the Pharisee, tread in his steps, and must have done just as he did, had the same thing occurred to them. It will teach you, that as there were none in common repute more wicked than the Publicans; so there are none so wicked as to justify your placing yourself above them. Hence you will learn to be constantly on your guard against self-complacency as a dangerous though subtle enemy to your soul. You will repel its vile insinuations, to which you will find yourself exposed, whenever you hear of the faults or see the wickedness of others. You will be jealous lest pride should grow out of the consciousness of what God has done for you; and be afraid of nothing more than the vanity of your own mind; remembering that Truth itself has thrice proclaimed, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

From this true representation of the tempers of a Christian towards his fellow-creatures, it is evident, that he must prove an inestimable blessing to all in connection with him. For what a delightful union is found in his heart, of useful and excellent qualities! Who would not rejoice to have that man for his superior or relation, his neighbor or acquaintance, in whom sincerity and justice, mercy and meekness, candor and universal benevolence, shine with continued lustre? Who must not admire a man habitually exercising all these virtues, yet taking himself the lowest place; not counting himself to have apprehended, not soothing the vanity of his mind by the applause he receives, or by any comparison of himself with others; but doing this one thing, pressing forward, ashamed of his small progress. Such is not the ideal picture of what a Christian should be, but the practice of thousands who are living by faith in the Son of God, as their atoning sacrifice and the Lord their righteousness. In fact, every one who has a Scripture title to the character of a Christian, will thus walk in this world, and be thus zealous of good works.

## SUNDAY XXVI.—CHAP. XXVI.

### ON THE DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN IN A MARRIED STATE.

IN the last chapter we took a view of the real Christian exercising sincerity, justice, and mercy, meekness, candor, love, and humility, towards all his fellow-creatures. We now come to consider him discharging those peculiar duties which are incumbent upon him when engaged in the married state.

The mutual duty of Christian husbands and wives is fidelity and love: the separate duty, sup-

port and government, on the husband's part; on the wife's, assistance and obedience.

Fidelity to the marriage-bed is equally bound by the matrimonial covenant on both parties; because, in virtue of this union, they become each other's property. So that it is not possible for either to yield to the embraces of another without a crime punishable in every well-ordered society; without disannulling the covenant of marriage; without justifying a divorce; without incurring the wrath of the righteous God, who hath said, "Whoremongers and adulterers he will judge."

In the eyes of all, therefore, who form their sentiments by the Scriptures, lewdness in the marriage-state is abhorred as the blackest villany. And so far must Christian husbands and wives be from injuring each other by defiling the marriage-bed, that they must be free from every thing in their air, dress, or discourse, which would encourage wanton desires. Whatever has this tendency, however polite and fashionable, they must shun as a hateful violation of the spirit of their marriage-contract.—In their judgment, it must be no sufficient observation of conjugal fidelity barely to be innocent of adulterous commerce: they must maintain a purity of heart undefiled by any lusting after others, and by any lascivious jesting, which discovers at least an appearance of it. Nothing less than this is necessary on the man's part, to keep his marriage-vow inviolate, and on the woman's, to show a chaste conversation. A duty equally incumbent on both: and for either to transgress here, is audaciously to rebel against the plain command of the Lord God Almighty, against his benevolent everlasting ordinance.

To fidelity must be added mutual tender love.—For love is the life of marriage; without which it differs as much from the comfortable society the gracious God intended to establish by it, as a state of servitude from one of freedom. When this union was first made in Paradise, it was immediately declared, that the bonds of marriage should prove stronger than the bonds of nature; so that a man should "forsake even his father and mother," from whom he instrumentally derived his being, "and cleave to his wife." Like the two pieces of wood which God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to join together, and they became one in his hand. Ezek. xxxvii. 17. So the marriage-tie was ordained as an including rind, to make of two persons one flesh. From this intimate union there ought ever to follow a constant circulation of all kind offices and endearments, just as the vital juices circulate through the natural body.

From hence it follows, that husbands and wives, though irreproachable even in their own consciences, in point of conjugal fidelity, are still greatly guilty if they live in indifference, or slight regard to each other. It is true, a failure in point of love does not, as adultery, break the marriage-bond, but it defeats one principal purpose of its institution.—For it was designed to unite the hearts of the married pair as much as their bodies; and to produce the delicious fruit of the most consummate friendship, from the pleasing combination of two persons, whose interests were by this means made invariably the same. But, instead of these advantages, want of love in either of the parties will pervert the state of marriage into the most grievous infelicity and burden of life.

For this reason, great stress is laid in God's holy word on this duty. Husbands and wives are not only commanded to preserve the bed undefiled, but to maintain also a most affectionate regard for each other. The precept indeed is immediately addressed to husbands, but the force of it must equally reach to both parties engaged in the nuptial union: "So



ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh: but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." Eph. v. 28, 29. The quick feeling which every man has of the least injury done to his own body, the invincible aversion to every thing painful to it, the incessant desire of possessing it in health and comfort, form the image here used to represent the strength, the delicacy, and the perpetuity of conjugal affection. And as our bodies do not partake less of our care and love, on account of their weakness, deformity, or disease, or because they prove much more burdensome to us than others of a healthier habit, find theirs to be; so no disagreeable qualities, no perverse humors on either side, can justify the other party in withholding the tribute of love.—These faults indeed will make it more difficult to behave with proper tenderness and affection; but though severe trials of our faith and patience, they by no means vacate the obligations of the married state.

This truth is finely taught the husband in the conclusion of the precept, by directing him to copy the tender love of the Saviour towards his church in his own behavior to his wife. As if it had been said, "You yourself abundantly experience the care of the Lord Jesus Christ over you, and observe it exercised over your fellow-Christians; you see how he bears with your negligences and your infirmities, with how many things in themselves blameable, and to him peculiarly distasteful; yet he grows not cold to your welfare, nor rejects you from among his children. Show you therefore the same tenderness one towards another, as the whole church experiences from its head; and never think you are either of you at liberty to yield to moroseness, or to be void of love."

Further: Christian husbands and wives must not only be faithful to each other's bed, and cordially love each other's person, but their conjugal affection must be spiritual also both in its foundation and in its exercise.

It must not be built only on beauty; for this is one of the most fleeting things in nature, incapable, even while it lasts, of maintaining its enchanting power. Hence those who come together with rapture, enamored with each other's form, often grow cold, and soon become distasteful to one another.—At least there can be no security this will not sooner or later prove the melancholy event, when the cause of love is so superficial, so sensual.

But suppose that good sense, good manners, or the appearance of a temper formed for the dearest friendship, should engage the parties in a married union: even these amiable accomplishments, without divine grace, may leave them in great danger of estrangement from each other; for these excellences do not subdue either pride, or a love of independence, or of the world. Husbands and wives, therefore, who have no better foundation of their love than these charms, with which they were at first struck, by finding more restraint in the marriage-state than was expected, or less reality of amiable tempers, often in fact lose the love they had when they first came together; especially where the bitterness of misfortune produces a change in worldly circumstances. It is too frequent to see the well-bred, the sensible, the sweet-tempered husband or wife, changed by the loss of fortune, into a fretful, complaining, irksome companion. Indeed, the reason why this is not the case much oftener, is owing to the providence of God, which keeps men out of those trials they are not strong enough to bear.

The affection of Christian husbands and wives must be established upon a firmer basis. The husband must love his wife, not only for the charms of

her person, the sweetness of her manners, or even the affection he knows she bears him; but, above all, because their supreme Benefactor, the Lord of heaven and earth, hath said, "Husbands, love your wives." The Christian wife must also love her husband principally in obedience to the divine will; not on account of the superiority of his understanding, the applause he receives, the honor of his condition, or the cordiality of his affection towards herself. For if conjugal love is not secured by conscience towards God, a thousand various accidents may make that union miserable, which was happy before. Some sudden storm of contention may arise, violent enough to tear up natural affection by the roots. Some bitter expression may escape in the heat of passion, which shall eat in secret as a canker, and consume all enjoyments of the marriage-state.

Husbands and wives, on the contrary, in whose hearts the love and authority of God reign, will be united together by the common object of their highest adoration and all-sufficient happiness; they will find their affection, like the law of their God, which has bound them in so close an alliance, constant and unalterable.

And as the ground of affection between Christian husbands and wives must be spiritual, so must the various exercises of it too. To be solicitous to procure a comfortable provision for a wife; to abhor the thought of leaving her in distress or dependence, when diligence or frugality may prevent it, is common to every married man, who is not sunk beneath the level of humanity. In like manner, for the wife diligently and discreetly to manage her husband's family, cheerfully to join in every thing for their common good, attentively to study to make his life and home agreeable to him, is an expression of affection which may subsist in a heart altogether void of the least savor of Christianity. Mutual and earnest endeavors to be pleasing to each other are often found where the parties can see and hear each other do a thousand things in open defiance of God's authority: and where, instead of disapproving silence, and meek remonstrance on either side, they remain perfectly well satisfied with each other. A most perfidious kind of love is this, though every where prevalent; a sort of hideous confederacy against the cause of God and truth, in which they encourage and strengthen one another, and are the principal instruments of each other's everlasting condemnation.

In a manner totally different from this must the affection which Christian husbands and wives bear towards each other, show itself. They must be most concerned for each other's spiritual welfare; they must be kind and tender-hearted inspectors of each other's conduct, meekly pointing out errors, and with love admonishing for faults, which otherwise would have escaped notice. They must converse together of the power, the glory, the mightiness of God's kingdom, to kindle and increase their mutual love towards him. They must prompt each other to holy vigilance, and a frequent use of the means of grace; they must associate chiefly with that sort of company which tends to increase carefulness for the soul, faith in Jesus, love to God, and all the graces of a Christian life. As the nuptial union gives each of the parties much influence which may prove either greatly serviceable or terribly hurtful to each other's everlasting interests, they must look upon themselves as bound in conscience to use it all, against the corruptions of the heart, against pride, unbelief, and worldly lusts.

In this manner, with unspeakable advantage and delight, Christian husbands and wives prove the spiritual nature of their conjugal affection; and then they will be sure to find it equally constant in

youth and age, sickness and health, indigence and plenty, lasting as their abode together in this world, and redounding to their advancement in glory in that which is eternal.

Now real Christians are the only persons capable of dwelling together in the mutual exercise of such spiritual and permanent affection; because they alone confess their own innate depravity in the sight of God; and, under this humbling sense of themselves, use the means of grace aright. They alone are constant and persevering in prayer, for daily remission of each other's sins; for the Holy Ghost to help each other's infirmities, and to grant daily supplies of strength against occurring temptations.

These humble exercises of heart prove a fruitful source of mutual endearment. They deeply impress each party with a sense that they are connected by ties far more noble even than those of wedlock: that they are children of one heavenly Father, servants of one gracious Lord, members of one body, and heirs of one glorious kingdom. The lively knowledge of these inestimable privileges, and of a common interest in them, has power to unite, even at the first interview, those who were strangers to each other's persons. Judge then how much more effectual this knowledge, when increased and enlightened by daily prayer, must be to prevent coldness and alienation of love in those who are already united in fervent affection.

Again: it is satiety which often proves the bane of conjugal affection. The parties by long acquaintance grow insipid to each other: the husband grows more reserved, or the wife loses her vivacity; in either case disregard ensues. But the spiritual course in which believers in Jesus are engaged, prevents this satiety; the infinite grandeur of the objects of their common faith, the importance of their nuptial union with respect to them, joined to a mutual desire of obtaining salvation, will not suffer that stagnation to take place in the married state, in which otherwise it is so frequently found to settle.

Further; strife and contention first cool, and then destroy all conjugal affection. But the devout exercises in which the faithful in Christ Jesus are employed, are of great efficacy to prevent variance; or when in any measure it happens, to heal it. For when they appear before God, seeing and lamenting their own defects, renouncing themselves, and praying that their repeated offences may not be imputed to them, but remitted for the sake of Jesus, how easily will they find it to confess their own proneness to passion, to make merciful allowances for each other, and to divide the blame instead of imputing it wholly to one side, after the manner of pride and self-sufficiency! By these concessions the contention will end in mutual self-condemnation, and in earnest desire of greater vigilance against any disagreement in future.

Though the height and ardor therefore of natural love which usually precedes the nuptial union, and flourishes after it for a time, may wear off and subside, husbands and wives who are united in Christian knowledge and principles, may be certain that a solid tender affection will ever remain; an affection far more exalted, sufficient to produce all the happiness the marriage-state was intended to afford, and ripening more and more as they grow in grace and every divine attainment.

Besides mutual fidelity and love, which are branches of duty common to both parties in the married state, there are some also peculiar to the husband, others to the wife; and the conscientious discharge of these respectively, will be regarded as matter of strict duty by the faithful in Christ Jesus.

The peculiar province of the HUSBAND is to go-

*vern.* "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." Eph. v. 23. Therefore, when the husband ceases to preside, giving up without just reason the authority to the wife, he transgresses no less than an officer in an army would do who surrenders the honor of his command to the impotency and ambition of an inferior. But then, as the head hath no interest of its own distinct from the rest of the body, nor any advantage over the other parts (unless the care of directing and providing for them be deemed an advantage) so the husband hath no interest separate from his wife, nor any private advantage flowing from his superiority. For the authority intrusted with the husband by Almighty God is designed for the direction, the preservation, and well-being of the wife, and therefore can never be exercised by any husband, who fears God, but with this view, and to this excellent end; not with such arbitrary power as men rule their slaves, but with such a benign influence as the soul exerts towards the body, presiding over and governing it; for the command, in the Christian rule of conduct is, that "husbands dwell with their wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel," 1 Pet. iii. 7. that is, making the superiority which God hath ordained and given them a reason, not of insolence and abuse, but of indulgent tenderness. So that the authority lodged in the husband, by being managed with propriety, instead of proving a galling yoke to the wife, shall be found a real source of greater ease and happiness to both.

Another peculiar branch of the husband's duty to his wife is to *provide* her with all things necessary, convenient, and comfortable according to his own rank and condition of life. He must express a pleasure in letting her share in all the advantages he possesses, and by evident marks of joy convince her that he is made happy by seeing her use, within the limits which God has prescribed, all the worldly accommodations he enjoys. And though conjugal affection renders any command to the husband to communicate in his joys with his wife less needful, it is still necessarily included in that sacred injunction, "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it." Eph. v. 28, 29.

The peculiar duty of the Christian wife, and which for conscience towards God she will observe, is to give aid and comfort to her husband in the midst of his business and labor. The good management of a family is a thing quite different from making a provision for the support of it. The former, in general, depends chiefly on the wife; the latter is the husband's province. In this manner the labor of life is divided, and if either neglects their respective duty, much confusion may be expected, which it was one design of the nuptial union to prevent. A Christian wife, therefore, instead of affecting to be above the care of a family, as if she was made only to dress, visit, and be esteemed, like a statue or a picture, for her shape or face, will look well to the ways of her household, and eat not the bread of idleness. Thus will she give her husband a solid testimony of her regard to him, by being careful to see that the fruit of his labor, or his income, is not wasted through extravagance, or consumed for want of female inspection and order at home.

A second instance of duty peculiar to the wife, is obedience to the will of her husband. When Eve the mother of the human race sinned through a vain desire of knowledge, the most holy God was pleased to punish that vanity with a disappointment of the very end at which it aimed, by making that desire of pre-eminence a reason of her subjection.



It pleased God therefore to declare that from thenceforward her desires should be referred to the will of her husband, either to reject or comply with them in things lawful as he thought proper: "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Gen. iii. 16.

It is therefore nothing less than an open resistance of the ordinance of God: it is nothing less than a proud self-exalting contempt of the word of God, in a wife to affect to rule or to refuse to submit to the authority of her husband. For this submission is ordained of God, even from the fall of man; and is confirmed again by the command of the inspired apostle, "As the church is subject to Christ," acknowledging his power, and submitting to his authority, though contrary to natural inclination, "so let the wives be to their own husbands, in every thing." Eph. v. 24. The plain meaning is, that in every instance, where the command of the husband does not interfere with duty to God, the wife is obliged to comply, and give up her own will without murmuring.

If it is urged, that the wife has frequently more understanding and ability to govern than the husband, and therefore on this account may think herself excused from paying obedience and living in subjection, the answer is obvious: she has liberty to use her superior wisdom in giving counsel, in producing such strong reasons as are proper to correct a mistaken judgment, and persuade a change of sentiment or conduct. But if the force of her persuasions prove ineffectual, subjection is her wisely appointed duty. Indeed, if more than the liberty to advise were allowed, on account of greater talents, it must follow, that authority is founded on the superiority of intellectual endowments; a notion big with confusion and ruin to society. For suppose a servant endued with more capacity and grace, too (as often is the case,) than his master, still how insolent, how insupportable would it appear, should this be urged as a reason for his refusing to be under a control, to which it was indisputably his duty to submit on another account; indisputably his duty, because, though allowed to be superior in understanding, he is inferior in station. To attempt therefore to gain the place of authority, or contend for it on account of gifts and parts, is to abuse them to the subverting that order which the sovereign Giver of them has himself established. The Christian rule is positive against such usurpation. It speaks thus: "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband," that is, in opposition to violent pride and selfishness of human nature, let her with carefulness watch her own heart, that she may not be found wanting in submission to him; for if she is, her deportment is most unbecoming a woman professing godliness. Let her look through her husband to God the author of the marriage union, and habitually call to mind the holy appointment so plainly made known in his word.

It is a case which too frequently happens, that one party is brought to the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, whilst the other remains in natural unbelief and bitter prejudice against the power of godliness. Here much of the comfort of the nuptial union must be prevented: here, instead of animating and assisting each other in their best interests, the believing husband or wife will find a severe cross in the vain company, the foolish discourse, the favorite pleasures, and the low pursuits, in which only the unconverted party can delight. Yet in these trying circumstances, the power of Christian faith will display itself to great advantage. It will produce a persevering meekness, and patient waiting in love, if God peradventure shall give repentance to the acknowledgment of truth. It will excite to greater circumspection in adorning the

gospel, so that the mind disaffected to God and his great salvation may be won over even without the word. It will provoke to earnest intercession with God to crown his loving-kindness by making both one spirit in the Lord, who are already united by the marriage-tie.

## SUNDAY XXVII.—CHAP. XXVII.

### THE DUTY OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN.

THE nearest connection in life after the nuptial union, is that which subsists between *parents* and their *children*. From this connection arises various duties both of a temporal and spiritual kind, to the discharge of which every Christian will conscientiously attend.

I. It is a duty all parents owe their children to accustom them to a habit of industry, to inspire them with a contempt and abhorrence of idleness, as the great corrupter of the human mind and inlet to every vice. The poor must strongly insist upon their children's giving themselves diligently to work, not only as necessary to procure themselves bread, but as the means of preventing temptations to pilfering and theft, and keeping them from infamy and the gallows. The children of the rich stand in no less need of being excited to industrious application of their time and talents. From their earliest years they should hear that neither wealth nor a large estate, not even nobility of birth, can preserve them from being despicable and noxious to society, if they take no pains to acquire what will improve the mind, and give them ability to perform their duty; that without love of employment suited to their station, like truant school-boys, they must seek men as idle as themselves for their companions; and, to kill time, must be eager in the pursuit of foolish and puerile amusements; and even be tempted to sink into meanness and the wickedness of a debauched life, merely to free themselves from the languor and misery of sloth. On the contrary, that by cultivating the love of study and fine writers, by being active and useful, by improving their advantages of station, they will never feel time a burden on their hands. They will always be doing good, and be honorable in their generation. These instructions, enforced by the example of the very conduct they inculcate, will work as a powerful antidote to the intoxicating pride which wealth and grandeur naturally inspire. Enforced, I say, by the example of the conduct they inculcate; for if the persons who give these instructions violate them, they can have no effect.—Children must necessarily believe that their parents judge that to be the way of happiness in which they see them continually walk, because they do it out of choice; and if they did not think it best, why should they choose it? As it would therefore appear cruel in parents to correct or reprove for tempers and practices their children learn from themselves, so it would be absurd to expect that precept or reproof should profit them, when the persons from whom they come, are not themselves acting under their influence.

II. It is the duty of parents to make a provision for their children, sufficient, if they can, to enable them, by honest industry, or some liberal profession, to support themselves, and be useful members of society. For what can be more contrary to the feelings of parental love, than, by idleness or extravagance, to expose their offspring to poverty, or to force them to settle in a station of life much beneath that in which they were born, a cause frequently of much vexation to them, and a bitter dis-

appointment which few are able to bear. But with regard to what may properly be called a provision, reason, not fashion, the word of God, not blind affection, must determine. When persons who were born to no estate, think it incumbent on them to amass wealth sufficient to raise their children above the need of any employment or profession, scanty must be their charities, and strong their love of money. And so far is opulence from being any real benefit to children, that (a few instances excepted) it proves a corrupter of their hearts, a pandering to their lusts, fixing them in habits of vanity extravagance, and luxury.

III. But the duty which, above all others, is incumbent on parents, is to provide, as far as lies in them, for the spiritual and everlasting welfare of their offspring. And here let me request the most serious attention of every parent. I am at a loss for words strong enough to describe the importance of this duty. Parents ought to consider themselves as chiefly living for the proper discharge of it, and as in the most solemn manner accountable to God for their conduct herein. Let them attend to the many and strong obligations by which they are bound to the performance of it.

*First,* This is clearly the command of God: "These words," saith he "which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6, 7.—"He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." Psal. lxxviii. 5—7. The New Testament enforces the same duty, and calls upon fathers to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. vi. 4.

*Secondly,* This command of God is solemnly acknowledged by the covenant into which professing Christians enter their children. Almost as soon as they have received them from God, they vow, in the ordinance of baptism, to educate them in the service, and for the honor of their Maker and Redeemer. Or if they do not appear themselves as sponsors for their own children, they make choice of some particular friends who engage to see their children properly instructed. Unless therefore these parents are careful to do for their children what was then promised in their behalf, they turn the solemn religious rite, which claims God our Saviour for its Author, into an idle ceremony.

*Thirdly,* Natural affection should influence Christian parents to be solicitous for the salvation of their children. That they know they have immortal souls is taken for granted; therefore if they neglect the cultivation and improvement of them, anxious only to heap up wealth, to provide them with temporal subsistence, this is but a brutish fondness, not a rational, much less a Christian kind of love. A rational, a Christian affection for children, must make parents reason thus about them:

"These tender plants, sprung from our own bodies, are endued with an immortal spirit: they possess a capacity of serving, loving, and enjoying the favor of the blessed God for ever. And if they do not serve, love, and enjoy him for ever, their production into being, instead of a blessing, will prove an insupportable curse. We, their parents, feel such love for them, as impels us to think no pains too great to provide for their present comfort.

But what avails it to secure them, were we able, from the evils of transient sickness, pain, and poverty, if woes of endless duration are to be their final portion? What avails the most ardent affection, which reaches only to the mortal part, if all that lieth in our power is not done, that after their passage through the present short-lived scene, they may enter into eternity in the favor of God?"

A small degree of natural affection, where there is persuasion of the certainty of another world, must excite such reasoning as this in the breasts of parents, and be followed with some correspondent care in the education of their offspring.

But those parents, who are in truth what they profess to be, Christians, have a clear view by faith of the realities of the invisible world. Of those realities they feel the unspeakable importance, and such is their love to God, that were it in their power to accomplish it there would not remain one rebel upon the face of the earth, one slave to sin. They are grieved to see any perishing, whilst Jesus, mighty to save, and merciful to pardon, stands ready with open arms to receive all who will come to him for life. With what greater force then must these principles and sentiments work in them towards their own offspring? How solicitous, how active must they be, to secure their spiritual welfare?

*Fourthly,* The aptitude of children to receive either good or bad impressions, which can scarcely be afterwards effaced, forms another powerful argument for instructing them with the utmost care in the knowledge of God. Should this noble opportunity to season their minds with excellent sentiments, and to furnish them with just notions be lost, all future methods of instruction or means of grace are likely to be without effect. For children very soon and very justly conclude, that whatever their parents inculcate with seriousness and frequency, must be worthy of their remembrance; and, on the contrary, that the things which they have never or very seldom taught them, must be of little or no advantage to their happiness. Hence young people who have never been instructed at home in the nature of the excellent majesty of the Lord our God; of our absolute dependence upon him, and of his unwearied mercy towards us, attend the public worship of his name with most offensive levity and profaneness of carriage. What mere babbling also must their secret prayers be (if they are directed to pray at all,) if they have never been instructed in the nature and qualities of sin, never been taught the worth of the soul, or the weakness and depravity of men, on which is founded the necessity of prayer and the aids of grace? What an invincible obstacle, humanly speaking, to the success of the preacher of the gospel, must be found in the hearts of young people, whose natural ignorance, pride, and unbelief, like poisonous plants, have been nourished by their parents' principles, or suffered to strengthen by their criminal neglect? Nay, even the calls of God in the voice of his providence, by the death of relations, by misfortunes, and afflictions in the family, are likely to lose their intended benefit, where no care has been taken to teach children, that these are monitors from God, to lead men to consider their ways and repent of their transgressions.

It is true (blessed be the free grace of God, and the power of his Spirit) that children who were utterly neglected, and even become depraved through their parents' neglect, have been and are brought daily to the knowledge of salvation by Christ. Nevertheless, it is certain that the abounding both of empty formality and open profaneness is in a great measure owing to parents neglecting their duty to their children, and by them it must be answered for. And this suggests another reason.



*Fifthly*, Which should engage parents to care for the salvation of their children. God takes particular notice of their behavior in this matter. Abraham, the father of the faithful and friend of God, stands greatly distinguished on this very account: "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and a mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him." Other shining excellencies in Abraham might have been mentioned: but the Lord God, you observe, selects and holds forth to our notice, as a peculiar excellency in which he delighted, and names it in conjunction with the inestimable promise of the Saviour, that Abraham would above all things regard the salvation of his children, and the honor of God in his family.

*Sixthly*, The state of children, exposed to the most alarming dangers, loudly calls upon parents to be solicitous for their salvation. Their case demands compassion, for they are wholly distempered. How much grief, anger, and vexation do you see them feel, even in their very childhood, from their natural stubbornness, passion, envy, pride, and selfishness? And do you not know what these disorders portend? What greater troubles, what severer conflicts, what more frequent vexations await them as their certain portion, unless the strength of these baleful passions are subdued? Are you not conscious what latent seeds of various lusts are to be found in their hearts, which will ripen by time, and occasion a terrible harvest of corruption, unless prevented by you? Can you think of this, and be negligent or dilatory in commending their case to the great Physician of souls, and teaching them how much they need and ought to seek for his power to heal them?

Were a parent to leave his child alone in paths beset with beasts of prey, and full of covert precipices, would not his scandalous negligence or wanton barbarity shock every humane heart? But do you act a better part, O parent, if you leave your child to walk through this world, filled with seducing objects, infested with a subtle watchful adversary, and lying in wickedness—to walk through such a world, without the light of faith, the defence of God, the influences of his Spirit; ignorant of the grounds of justice, truth, sobriety, chastity, and a Christian life; by what strength they are to be practised; why are they so absolutely required; and what the irreparable misery of violating these holy duties?—A young man or woman entering upon the stage of life, ignorant of these things, is like a child deserted by its unnatural parent in the howling wilderness, and is not more likely to escape destruction.

But should there be any parents so hardened in profaneness, as not to care what may become of their offspring hereafter, provided they escape poverty, and prosper in this world; let them know and hear once more, whether they will attend to the awful truth or no, that there is a day coming when they will see that their relation to their children was constituted for far higher purposes than to secure them advantages in this world, or to keep them from its misfortunes. Then how insupportable will it be to them to hear their own children calling out for justice on them, imputing their damnation, in a great measure, to their cruelty.—They kept the dreadful danger out of sight, they suffered their passions to rule, they joined in extolling pleasures, riches, honor, and power; but never exposed the mischief, infamy, and ruin, inseparable from obstinate disobedience to God. How insufferable the anguish, when children with bitter imprecations, will rage against their father and mother,

and curse the day in which they were born to them, born finally to aggravate their misery, by perishing together with them.

The united force therefore of these various obligations, and these heart-affecting considerations, must make all Christian parents active and solicitous above every thing to do what lies in their power, as instruments, to prepare their offspring to receive the truth of God to the saving of their souls, and to use those methods in which they may expect his grace to work with them, and give them the desired efficacy.

## SUNDAY XXVIII.—CHAP. XXVIII.

### ON THE METHOD OF INSTRUCTING CHILDREN.

THE duty of Christian parents to instruct their children in the knowledge of God and Christ has been laid before you. But as the condition and capacities of men are very different, it is accordingly the duty of some, and what God will undoubtedly require at their hands, to bestow much more pains in this matter, and to use a greater variety of methods with their children than others.

The poor will discharge their duty to their children by correcting them from their early childhood for lying, for pilfering, even in the smallest degree, for swearing, for quarrelling, and for every mark of a cruel disposition—by frequently declaring to them that it is a good and gracious God who gives their parents strength to provide food for their offspring: that he is their Maker, whose eye is ever over all, that he may give unto every one according to his doings, when he shall call the whole world before his tribunal: that this glorious God will ever bless, love, and comfort those that fear and love him, but punish with inconceivable pains all wicked and ungodly persons, who do the things and live in the tempers which he hates.

The poor who fear God themselves, have it further in their power to make their children pray morning and evening—to tell them that the Bible is the word of God, which they must believe and love; to carry them to church on the Lord's day, and to keep them from profaning it. And when these things are enforced by a good example, there is little doubt but the children of the poor will be greatly blessed, and generally speaking, tread in the steps of their godly and excellent parents. And where so much time must be employed in hard labor, and the understanding can be so little improved, this may justly, I apprehend, be deemed a conscientious discharge of their duty towards their children whilst they are young.

But when years have ripened the minds of their offspring, all that believe in Jesus, however poor, will delight to enlarge their instructions. They will tell them that their own guilty consciences never found peace, till they depended on the atoning blood of Jesus shed on the cross, and pleaded that alone for their pardon before God; that they obtained deliverance from their strongest sins only by praying for the power and presence of God's Spirit: that they have been kept in peace from worldly fears, and from anxiety for a subsistence, by casting all their care upon God reconciled to them in his dear Son.

In the middle ranks of life, where superior education has better qualified parents, and leisure has made them capable of taking more pains with their children, it is certainly their duty to go far beyond the poor in this important matter. They must therefore not only use the same care as the poor in all the things already mentioned, in instilling into them a

regard for truth, justice, and mercy; but study also the most probable methods of making divine knowledge pleasant to the souls of their children. A successful method of doing this, I apprehend, will be to watch the opportunities when outward things and particular providences will give efficacy to their religious instruction. Now this, by a proper attention, may be done by parents in so great a variety of instances, as to take in all the particular branches of divine knowledge, in which children should be established.

To explain myself at large: the first thing in which all children should be thoroughly instructed, is that God is good and gracious, and that the earth is full of his goodness. To give force to this truth, which you must be often inculcating upon your children, point out to them, in the spring, when the whole country is arrayed in all its beauty, what their eyes attest, the wide-extended bounty of God; tell them they are *his* clouds which drop fatness; that is *his* sun which imparts its genial warmth to make the ground fruitful; that *he* causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, and bread to strengthen man's heart, and oil and wine to make him of a cheerful countenance; that could they see the bounty of God in its whole extent, they would see innumerable millions of creatures in heaven above, in earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, sustained by his daily, his incessant communications of good. In autumn, when the fields stand thick with shocks of corn, and the trees bend under their load of fruit; amidst this delightful scene, draw aside the veil of ignorance, and fix their attention upon God, as the invisible yet only cause of all the plenty and beneficence before and around them. In winter you will have frequent opportunities of bringing the elements to bear witness to the glory of their Maker. In this dreary season of the year, when frost has made the earth as iron, and congealed the flowing streams into solid ice, lead your children to observe how passive the whole creation is in the hand of its eternal Maker. When the cold is so intense as to become in some degree distressing, and its continuance would prove hurtful, then observe to them how instantly he changes the scene; he bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow again. At another time, when the deep snow falls, and covers every object with its fleeces; teach them how suddenly at his word it totally disappears, having answered the purpose for which it was sent.

Pursuing the same method, when you have told your children of the power of God, and what a dreadful thing it is to have him their enemy, repeat the instruction just after his thunder has shaken your dwelling, and the arrows of his lightning have glared before their eyes; or just after the tempestuous wind has left in the neighborhood some traces of its fury. That is the time to assure them that fire and vapor, snow and hail, storm and tempest, wild and outrageous as they seem to us, move only as and where God appoints their course, with infinitely more exactness than the best disciplined troops obey the signals of their leader; and that though the earth should be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea, the Lord of hosts is with his obedient people, and is their refuge and trust.

Thus by pointing out to your children the invisible God as working in all these most sensible changes, and by furnishing their minds with those sublime Scriptures, in which he asserts his own immediate absolute dominion over all the elements of fire and water, earth, and air; you will make the creation a school of instruction to them. By this manner of teaching you will give a body and substance to the truth, which otherwise is too abstracted for their

clear apprehension. Lectures of this kind, repeated not too frequently (lest they should surfeit children, a thing greatly to be guarded against,) but at such intervals as these various appearances occur, will early form your children to adore their great Creator, and impress them with a sense of his presence and agency in every place. Thus, in the most rational manner, and in obedience to your Maker's command, you will talk of him, and his works, and truth, "when you go out, and when you come in, when you sit down, and when you rise up."

Another truth of the last importance, which young children are capable of being taught, is, that health and strength are the gifts of God. This you must frequently assure them is the truth. But to make this truth palpable to them, watch some opportunity, and regard it as the noblest employ, to carry them to the bed of a brother, a sister, or play-fellow, who is sick and in pain. Immediately after the visit, take them aside to tell them you waited for this opportunity to persuade them of the truth of what you have often taught them, that it is God "who maketh sick and maketh well;" that it is owing to his sovereign infinitely wise appointment, that some are on a bed of languishing, crying out through strong pain; others decked with health, and smiling with joy; and conclude with observing how thankful you are to God, that they are still preserved by him in strength. The very same instruction will come also with a still more powerful application, when brought to their remembrance upon their own feeling the blessing of ease after the smart of pain.

It is of great benefit early to teach your children also that life and death, as well as sickness and pain, are at the supreme disposal of God. The proper season to rivet this instruction, is when a servant, a friend, or neighbor known to your children, is just expired, and the awful report is brought to their ears. Then the circumstances of the deceased immediately before death, the medicines used, the help of physicians, the sorrows, sighs, and tears of friends and relations, are to be urged as sensible proofs that it is God that taketh away our breath in infancy, youth, or riper years, just as he sees fit, and that none can deliver out of his hand.

At the same time especially, you should be careful to instruct your children what is meant by the news just brought to their ears, *Such a one is dead*. Then assure them that to die is to pass out of a changing world into one unchangeable: that it is the removal of an immortal soul out of a corruptible body, to be happy or miserable in an extreme degree, according to the conduct pursued in this life; that to every proud, every wicked, every unbelieving man or woman, whether rich or poor, a king or a beggar, death is the beginning of endless sorrow; but to every one who has loved God, and lived and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, death is the door to endless joys, and the perfection of glory.

And if it should please God ever to bring your own children into extreme danger of death, and yet restore them again to your arms, it would be a very criminal neglect in you to omit telling them, that you hung over their bed with tears, and felt for their pains, but could give them no ease; that you made your prayer to God, and by his power alone they were relieved and made whole. Suppose also, that either of you their parents has been recovered from the borders of the grave, and brought again with joy to see your offspring, that is the season to impress them with the truth, that God is the Lord of life and death; that it is he, who in tender mercy hath spared you still to be the guide of their youth.

All these methods of instruction should have been used, all these religious truths you ought to have inculcated upon your children before they have exceeded the age of twelve or fourteen. After this



period, generally speaking, they are capable of being reasoned with; capable of perceiving the force of all those capital arguments, upon which a godly and Christian life is supported against all opposition from without or within. Now their faculties are strong enough to receive those important doctrines, which before they were scarcely able to understand. The duty of parents therefore now requires them to proceed in inculcating Christian principles; in representing to them the excellency and absolute necessity of loving God, and delighting in his word and service; the sin of being peevish and discontented, passionate and proud, envious or revengeful, lewd, worldly, or covetous.

By this time your children will have committed so many faults, have been so often corrected, or rebuked sharply for them, and only restrained, contrary to natural inclination, from committing many more and greater, that you will have various striking proofs to convince them, that they are creatures corrupted in their nature, disaffected to the government and will of the glorious God, and full of vile propensities. Now show them the Scripture character of fallen man; produce that awful passage, "Yea also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live."—Eccl. ix. 3. And that parallel to it, "We all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." Isa. liii. 6. In full confirmation that their depravity is such as is here set forth, you may tell them what pains, what correction, what restraints you have been using with them from their very infancy, on account of their faults, to conquer their evil tempers, and to inspire them with love to God and man; and then appeal to their consciences, whether they do not find contrary tempers still rising and getting the mastery within, though they dare not suffer them to break out? Whilst you are thus unanswerably proving their innate corruption, it is however your duty to do it with tender expressions of love, lest by seeming to upbraid, pride and prejudice should be excited.

The use you are immediately to make of this discovery, is to prove to them the great need of the Redeemer's interposition and merits. For, after having fixed a conviction upon their consciences, that they have often knowingly done what God has forbidden, what their own hearts condemned them for, and that they have even taken pleasure therein—after proving that complication of injustice, ingratitude, and rebellion, which has been in their conduct towards God, you may draw with great force this important conclusion, that it did not become him, by whom are all things, to pardon and receive into his favor such sinful creatures without an atonement; without some sufficient and everlasting demonstration of his infinite abhorrence of their sin, whilst he was showing an astonishing degree of love for their persons—that without shedding of blood there could be no remission; nor any other way for the wisdom, justice, and mercy of God to act harmoniously in the salvation of sinners but through Jesus Christ—and that it is upon account of what Jesus did and suffered, that they have been spared, and never yet punished, as their provocations deserved.

Now also is the time to bring to their mind the great doctrines which the Scriptures reveal; that the Redeemer, who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant, and died on a cross, to the end that all who believe in him might be pardoned, sanctified, and saved. From this it will be easy to observe farther to your children, that no morality, no religion (where the gospel is known,) can be acceptable to him, however applauded and extolled by men, but that which is ex-

ercised in an entire dependence upon Jesus Christ, which proceeds out of a believing, humble heart, and consists in a constant exercise of all those tempers towards the world, our fellow-creatures, and our God, which were in Christ Jesus.

One point more with respect to Scripture doctrines, which your children are now very capable of being taught, is, their weakness and inability to live up to what the law of God justly requires. You may observe to them how often they have been breaking their resolutions, acting against their convictions, sorry for doing amiss, wishing and striving in their own fancied power to make themselves better, yet still defeated, still only the more entangled, vexed, and guilty in their own eyes. Tell them that this must ever be the case if they ask not for the Spirit of God, if they place not their trust wholly in his power and influence; acquaint them that God, knowing our weakness, has promised this Spirit, and commanded us to implore his continual aid and guidance. Desire them to make the experiment for themselves; to have done with placing confidence in their vows, promises, and good resolutions; and to pray, as creatures without strength and utterly depraved, for the Spirit of God to work effectually in them; and conclude with assuring them, that in this very manner you yourselves make application for power to lead a Christian life. And that whatever conformity to the will of God they see in your own behavior towards themselves or others, is wholly owing, not to any goodness of yours, but to the grace of God which is in you.

The last method of instruction I shall mention, and of equal benefit with those already hinted, is to remark to your children, now capable of observation, the amiable behavior of real Christians. I suppose you to be acquainted with some who justify their title to this glorious appellation. Remark the tranquillity of their countenance, and the modesty of their conversation; observe how free they are from passion and positiveness, from ill-natured wit or ostentation; how far from despising those who want their advantages, either of education, birth, or riches: how careful to give no pain or uneasiness to any one. In farther commendation of true Christianity, it will be of peculiar benefit to let your children, when grown up, witness the behavior of sincere believers in the midst of their severest trials. If you are a Christian yourself in spirit and in truth, it is most probable you will know persons of the same character. When such are in affliction or tribulation of any kind, carry your children to hear for themselves the meek patient sufferers blessing God for all their afflictions: not fainting, not discouraged, but quietly enduring chastisement. Their discourse, their very countenance will edify. This will irresistibly convince them of the value and substance of the knowledge of Christ, and open their eyes to see that it is as much to be desired for present support and consolation in a trying hour, as to secure salvation in the eternal world. Then assure them that true faith in Jesus, showing itself in unfeigned subjection to his gospel, leads to all the same comfortable acquaintance with God, and cheerful submission to his holy will.

And if an opportunity could be found of bringing your son or daughter to the bed side of a departing saint, it will infinitely exceed the force of all instruction, to let them see with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears, the faithful servant of God speaking good of his name, declaring how true the Lord his strength is, proclaiming the peace of his own mind under the pains of an approaching dissolution, whilst he is looking for the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Persons of rank, or of easy fortunes; those also

of the ministerial and various other professions, with merchants, and tradesmen of substance, will possess opportunity and ability to use with their dear children these and many other methods of instruction of the same kind, before they arrive at man's estate. And if in their own hearts they infinitely prefer the favor of God before the praise of men, the happiness of eternity before the poor satisfaction of time—if they know there is no other way of salvation for their offspring, than that which is marked out by the Spirit of God in his word, then such attention to the everlasting welfare of their children will not be irksome, but delightful. Their reward, generally speaking, will be with them in their labors of love, and their hearts will be gladdened by seeing considerable impressions made upon their children.

But if, instead of this attention, custom and fashion are taken for the rule and measure of what you, O parents, are to account a sufficient care of your children's education: if hours upon hours from day to day are consumed in amusements, and mere sensual gratification, hurtful to yourselves and others; whilst your children hear from you no wholesome lectures, and see in you no prevailing concern for the honor of God and the salvation of their souls, your conduct is dreadful indeed; your regard to Scripture is worthless, whatever you profess, and your ignorance of the excellency of God and the only way of true happiness, as gross as that of an Indian savage. Examine therefore, and prove your Christian faith by your works. The care you take for the salvation of your offspring, or your neglect of them, is the surest test of what you esteem the supreme good, the favor of God or of the world.

I shall only add further on this head of the duty of Christian parents towards their children, that it is absolutely necessary that the pains to instruct should be accompanied by constant prayer to God in their behalf. Without his grace their best concerted efforts will be ineffectual, and all their counsels vain; for "it is God who giveth the increase." You may take as much pains as it is possible, to make your offspring Christians altogether; but still those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ, "are born not of blood, nor of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Therefore you are the more earnestly, humbly, and incessantly to pray unto God to implant early in them his grace, and give power and success to your attempts, that as by them the inhabitants of the world are increased, an addition also may be made by their names to the church of the living God, and the inhabitants of heaven.

## SUNDAY XXIX.—CHAP. XXIX.

### THE DUTY OF CHILDREN, AND OF SERVANTS AND MASTERS.

HAVING considered the domestic duties of husbands and wives to each other, and of parents towards their children, it remains now that we complete those which concern a family, by stating such as relate to children, to servants, and to masters.

The duty of *children* towards their parents is,

1. To honor them by respectful language; by abstaining from every thing that may reasonably give them the least offence or disquiet. All young people who receive the Scripture as the rule of their behavior, will esteem it their duty to be exact and conscientious in this respect; because in the Scripture, God requires children to "honor their father and mother," promising his blessing to all who do so. This homage is expressly said to be "well pleasing unto the Lord." Col. iii. 20. The crime of disobedience to parents is marked as the just ob-

ject of the curse and judgments of God; for you read, that immediately after the prohibition of idolatry, a sin levelled directly against the glory of God himself, and after appointing all Israel to pronounce the idolater accursed, the very next offence, which at the same time is held forth as the object of universal execration, is the neglect of paying a dutiful regard to parents; "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father and mother, and all the people shall say, Amen." Deut. xxvii. 16. And in case any child did walk with stubbornness, and refuse to obey the voice of his father, or of his mother, after correction, it was the special appointment of the most high God, that his father and his mother should "lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they were to say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear and fear." Deut. xxi. 18—21.

What strong conceptions of the great guilt of disobedience to parents, must this ordinance raise in the minds of all who regard the word of God! For though this civil and political law is not now executed upon rebellious children, it remains a sufficient proof of the detestation with which God regards the disobedience of children towards their parents.

2. It is the duty of children to conceal and extenuate the imperfections of their parents, so far as truth and justice will admit. This is but a small return for the great benefits which they have received; and if, instead of thus acting tenderly, they are guilty of exposing voluntarily either the sins or the indiscretions of their parents, they are very criminal in the sight of God. It was the sin of publishing and ridiculing, instead of covering his father's nakedness and shame, which brought down a signal judgment upon Ham.

3. It is the duty of children to requite their parents as far as lies in their power, for all the comforts and benefits by their means bestowed upon them. Ingratitude is the only sin which never found one single advocate: yet of all ingratitude, the negligence of children in supporting and comforting their parents, is by far the most black and abominable that can be practised by man towards man. For what care and expense, what solicitude and labor for the welfare of their offspring, are not parents usually wont cheerfully to bear? Now when, in the course of God's providence, parents stand in need of some returns of the same tender disposition towards themselves—when the infirmities of age, or the burdens of afflictions come upon them, what child, that is not without feeling, as well as without any tincture of Christianity, but must rejoice to be as helpful to them, now going out of the world, as his parents were to himself when he first came into it? This exercise of gratitude is marked in Scripture as the bounden duty of children towards their parents, and a neglect of it is considered not only as a renunciation of the gospel, whatever zealous professions of love to it may be pretended, but as a crime, which, even Pagans, void of the light and advantage of God's word, would abhor. "If any provide not for his own" (his own near relations, and especially his own aged parents,) "he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. v. 8.

The exact proportion indeed which a child ought to set apart for the discharge of this duty to his parents must be various, according to the condition of life. But if it be inadequate to the income of the child, God will regard it as a vile and despic-



ble offering. And this rule may always be observed, that if a person can be lavish in the pursuit of pleasure, and live in expensive splendor, whilst he is satisfied with assigning to his parents a strait and bare subsistence, a sense of duty is certainly not felt: and what is given, is given rather from fear of scandal, or from dread of remorse, than from love to God, or affection to his own parents.

4. The last duty I shall mention due from children to their parents is obedience; obedience in all cases which lie within the proper scope and influence of the authority of parents; where their commands do not lead their children to oppose what God has required, to do violence in matters of conscience to their own minds, or to transgress the laws of their country.

These are the duties which children are bound, from their relations to their parents, to observe.—And those children who obey the Scripture, will be found dutiful and affectionate and very observant of these things. Indeed, those parents who are neglected or despised by their children, may generally impute it to themselves. It is the effect and punishment of their own sin. They fostered, when they should have corrected, wicked tempers, in their children's earliest years: they shamefully sacrificed parental authority to a froward mind, and abjectly submitted to be governed by those over whom they were appointed governors, in the order of nature, and by the command of God. Excepting therefore a few cases, Christian parents, through the grace of God succeeding their endeavors, will reap as they have sown, and enjoy, even before they leave the world, the fruit of those cares and pains with which they studied to promote the salvation of their children, and will often die in the pleasing expectation of meeting them in endless glory.

There is still another domestic relation, namely, that which subsists between *masters* and *servants*. And a real Christian is furnished with ample directions and cogent motives to discharge his duty in either station with comfort to himself and those around him.

1. Servants who receive the word of God, must in the first place be faithful and honest, free themselves from deceit, and be incapable of suffering their masters to be injured in their sight. This has been observed in a preceding chapter, as part of their character as Christians. Besides this, they must obey their masters, without that surly sullen behaviour which renders their persons offensive, and their services disagreeable. It is ever a sure proof of prevailing pride, when subjection, though ever so reasonable, is galling. They must obey their masters in all things, provided that nothing is required oppressive or dishonest. A surly spirit in servants chiefly shows itself in families, where the wages given are comparatively small, and the servant is wanted not for show or luxury of living, but for usefulness and labor. It is in these instances therefore, especially, that the beneficial influence of Christian doctrine is to manifest itself in the behavior of servants. Christian servants will remember that their duty towards their master or mistress is not to be measured by the splendor of the family or the gains of the place, but by the order of God, who requires them "with good-will to do service, as to the Lord, and not to men." Eph. vi. 7.

2. It is the duty of servants patiently to bear reproach. The pride of human nature rises with eagerness in self-vindication, and is backward to own itself deserving of any blame. From this spirit servants are ever apt to impute the admonitions they receive to ill-nature or peevishness in their superiors: and if they bear without a visible contempt what is said, they look upon themselves at liberty to pay no more regard to it than is neces-

sary to keep their place, if it is a profitable one.—But no servant who receives the word of God can act in this unreasonable manner. It is expressly required of them to adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things: but if they show themselves deaf to just admonition, and hardened against reasonable remonstrances, they utterly disgrace their holy profession, and make their religious pretences contemptible. Besides, if they are not ready to acknowledge their faults, and will not patiently bear to be reproved for them, they must be void of humility, without which no man can possibly belong to Christ; since this is the direction particularly given to them in Scripture, "to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again." Tit. ii. 9.

And as servants who regard their Christian duty must be faithful and just to their masters, must obey them with cheerfulness, receive their reproofs with meekness, must be careful to amend what is faulty; so must *masters*, who are in subjection to Christ, conscientiously perform all parts of their duty towards their servants.

1. With respect to the justice, the mildness, the gentleness, and real good-will which masters must exercise towards their servants, these tempers were mentioned before, as necessary to every Christian. I shall speak now therefore only of those duties, which are peculiar to those who preside in families. The first of which is, "to be careful of the behavior of their servants." The head of every family is obliged to watch over those who are subject to his authority. We blame magistrates when they suffer irreligion and dissoluteness of manners among the people. And can a master of a family be guiltless, who connives at domestic irregularities, when with far less difficulty he can govern his little commonwealth? He ought therefore to look upon his servants, not as he does upon his cattle, merely considering the labor and service they can do, but as fellow-creatures capable of the knowledge of God, and as candidates equally with himself for his eternal kingdom. In this view it is his duty, and a part of a Christian benevolence, to suffer no immorality, nor any open violation of God's holy law in them—to oblige his servants to a regular attendance on the public worship of God on the Lord's day, and to insist on their not profaning it—to put books into their hands, written to awaken the conscience, and bring them to the knowledge of Christ;—and, if the nature of business does not in fact render it impracticable, to call the members of the household to join in the daily worship of God, who is the Fountain of all family mercies and blessings.

2. It is his duty also, to set a Christian example to servants; to be constant in worshipping God on his own day at church, and religiously to abstain in it from business and diversion—to convince them that he acts honestly, as in the sight of God, in all his dealings—to show them that he is innocent of those common yet presumptuous sins, of speaking loosely, swearing profanely, and living without any secret worship of your God. By this example, as far as means alone can be effectual, he will restrain from much evil, and prove a powerful monitor to stir up ignorant sinful creatures to seek after God; at least he will be pure from their blood, if they obstinately persist in their sin.

The last duty of masters which I shall mention is, to encourage and reward their servants for well-doing. Kind expressions quicken ingenuous minds to diligence and attention; encouragement therefore ought to be given to servants on this principle. Further, when a servant hath laid out his whole time and strength in his master's service, and made it his study to consult his interest, the master is

bound, by the ties of justice and gratitude, where there is a sufficient fortune, to remember such a faithful servant in the decline of life. And the cases of sickness, or accidental loss of limbs in service, which disable from labor, and are sometimes even more calamitous than the infinities of old age, call for equal compassion. A Christian master will consider how much others have lost by the dishonesty of those about them; how much trouble, anxiety, and vexation they have suffered, whilst he has committed, with composure and confidence, his affairs into the hands of a good and faithful servant, and has received no damage. How much of his comfort in this life has been owing to this material circumstance! Where then would be his Christian love, his generosity, or his humanity, if he did not take pleasure in showing kindness in return.

### SUNDAY XXX.—CHAP. XXX.

#### ON SELF-DENIAL—INTEMPERANCE.

FALSE teachers court the favor of men by preaching to them flattering doctrines; but Jesus, the true witness, abhors such base compliance with our corrupt passions. He places therefore in the very front, as it were, of his camp, before the eyes of every one assaying to enter into his service, this searching test of courage and fidelity: "Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me, he cannot be my disciple."

No doubt then can be made, whether self-denial is the duty of a real Christian. But what the ground of this grace is, what the important particulars in which it is exercised, are points of very useful and necessary consideration. The more so, because superstition has long done every thing possible to make this doctrine utterly contemptible; and enthusiasm is ever ready to place self-denial in things absurd or frivolous, whilst the substantial matters, about which in reality it is concerned, are little regarded.

Each of these points therefore I purpose fully to discuss. Thus every duty respecting himself, which the Christian is obliged and enabled to discharge, will be sufficiently explained.

The origin of self-denial is to be traced to the corruption of our nature by the fall of Adam. For if there were no innate propensity in all his offspring to evil, we might then indeed have been warned not to debase our dignity by complying with iniquity. Supposing that we possessed an untainted excellence of nature, so far would the abstaining from sin be from deserving the name of self-denial, that it would be the highest self-gratification. In this case a total opposition to transgression of every kind would be perfectly undisturbed by any thing within of a contrary tendency. The native bent of the soul would then incline it, with all its power, and with the highest relish, to perform duty in its full extent. This we necessarily conceive to be the state with those angels, who are sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation, and who consequently must be witnesses of what passes in our world. For, to connect the idea of self-denial with their abstaining from the pollutions of which they are spectators, would be to destroy the very perfection of their state.

But the present condition of man is directly opposite to that of superior beings who never fell from God. A corrupt bias prevails in his heart, which, instead of appearing to him detestable, is loved and cherished: so loved, that to be deaf to its tender pleadings for indulgence, and to sacrifice it in obe-

dience to God, is compared by him, who knew what was in man, to cutting off a right hand and plucking out a right eye. For though happiness is, in fact, inseparable from a uniform subjection to the truth of God, yet our corruptions represent these as things distinct, and even incompatible. Hence men naturally fight against the prohibition of God for their favorite selfish enjoyments, as subjects for their native rights against a tyrant: nor can they ever submit to it without doing violence to their own depraved appetites.

This being our natural state, the Lord Jesus Christ assures us, in the most unreserved manner, that if ever we become partakers of his great salvation, we must not only oppose the prevalent wickedness of the world around us, but those very inclinations, too, which are interwoven with our present frame, and therefore may properly be called a part of ourselves.

Having thus briefly observed what is the *origin* of self-denial, I proceed to point out the particulars in which this grace is to be exercised. Now as the constitutional sin makes that an instance to some of great self-denial, which is scarcely any to others; as there are cases, also, where decency, reputation, and worldly interest, create and maintain a kind of self-denial; and other instances, in which only the power of Christian godliness is sufficient: I shall therefore begin with such instances of it as, generally speaking, are most easy to practice, and then ascend to those, in which the sincerity and eminence of Christian self-denial shines forth, and most redounds to the honor of God.

First, then, *temperance* with respect to our food, is not to be practised without self-denial. Few, indeed, find much difficulty in abstaining so far from this bodily indulgence as to escape the censure of gluttony or Epicurism; yet to be so abstemious with regard to the pleasures of the table, as not to infringe upon the grace of Christian temperance, calls for some mortification in most people, and in many for a great deal. Without practising this, we shall be often guilty of over-charging ourselves, so far at least with surfeiting, as to feel the desire after eternal blessings and the delight in them greatly abated, if not extinguished for a time. With a reputation for temperance, we may indulge at our table, till indolence takes full possession of us, till neither body nor mind are disposed for any rational, much less any spiritual employment. To the want of self-denial, in respect of this low appetite, is owing that strong uneasiness and vexation often discovered, though more frequently concealed, when the gratification of the palate in the parlor, is disappointed by ignorance or neglect in the kitchen; to this are owing the many sensual remarks made in conversation upon what deserves no more notice than the husks the swine devour. These things, so frequently occurring, are sufficient proofs, that there is need of self-denial even with respect to our food. Indeed, he that receives any other pleasure than what health and hunger will make the common provisions of his table afford, has already begun to yield to intemperance, and is a transgressor of his Christian duty. He is shamefully giving encouragement to an appetite which must exceedingly sensualize his soul, enthrall it to bodily gratification, and of consequence render it averse to suffering in any degree for the sake of truth and conscience.—So that those who allow themselves to eat at large, and to have their thoughts dwell with delight on the luxury of the palate, are so far from taking heed as Christians are required, to make no provision for the flesh, that they are evidently pampering it: so far from being temperate, as is absolutely necessary for all who run the race Christ has set before us, that they remain slaves to sensuality. None are



capable of relishing, much less of making a progress in any thing so spiritual and divine as Christianity, till, in the language of holy writ, "they put a knife to their throat," when dainties are set before them; that is, strike at the root of that carnal gratification which arises merely from the pleasure of feasting.

A second instance of self-denial included under the head of temperance is, the strictly avoiding any degree of *excess in drinking*. It is necessary to speak distinctly on this subject, because, to the reproach of our species, self-indulgence in this respect is commonly placed in the number only of venial infirmities, and amongst the slight misdemeanors, for which other good qualities will amply atone.—To prove therefore the absolute necessity of self-denial, with respect to excess in drinking, consider what provocation it bears! It is a waste of that plenty which God designed to supply the wants of mankind. Now what can you conceive more contrary to reason, to humanity, and to the providence of our common Father, than that one man should be inflaming his body with pernicious draughts even to excess, whilst another wants the very necessities of life? that one should be swallowing down his poisonous cups in riot, which, if properly applied, would prove a cordial to the languishing, and revive the health of those who are fainting for the want of it? Suppose you had several children settled in some distant province, some of them prosperous, and others, through unavoidable misfortune, in a destitute condition; suppose the former were void of all feeling, giving themselves up to rioting and excess, refusing to retrench in the least degree in order to relieve their necessitous brethren: what mingled grief and indignation would the report of this raise in your breast! Yet this is the very case in the eye of our common Father, whenever the man, who has riches, consumes upon the extravagant gratification of his base appetites, what might have been applied to the relief of the poor and needy. Even allowing the intemperate man to have the means, and, in the language of the world, liberty to live as he pleases, still his conduct is chargeable with inhumanity and cruelty to those who are in want before his eyes; or who are at least so near him, that if he was not wilfully deaf or blind, he must hear their groans and see their distress.

But when the man, who indulges in intemperance and drunkenness, is poor, or one whose business or income is but just enough, with frugality, to support himself and his family, his guilt is still more aggravated. For then, whilst he is gratifying himself, and rejoicing in his cups, he is breaking through the tenderest ties of nature. He is stripping his children of that which is necessary to defend them from the cold; he is snatching the bread from the mouth of his little ones, ready to famish for want of food; and making his wife suffer to extremity for his sensuality. Therefore, though his besotted companions may extol him for his honesty and good-nature, and some be so stupid as to call him no man's enemy but his own, he is, in the eye of truth and of God, a monster of cruelty and villany. The Father of us all can look down upon no one of his creatures more horribly rebelling against his benevolent laws, or more injurious to those who are miserable enough to be in close connection with him, than the drunkard.

Further: we owe much thankfulness to God for our reason. By this we become capable of knowing him in his word and works here, and of enjoying him for ever hereafter. We are happy in ourselves, and useful to others, just in proportion as our reason is improved, by the due exercise and cultivation of it, through the knowledge of Scripture, and the grace of God. We may, therefore,

safely say, that one of the sorest evils which can befall us in this world, is the loss of our reason.—What guilt then must be chargeable on every drunkard, who presumptuously, only for the poor pleasure of gratifying the lowest appetite of his nature, suspends the use and exercise of his reason? who reduces himself to such a state that he knows neither what he does, nor what he says? And as we are commanded to be always on our guard in our discourse, and warned of the account we must give of it to God, what can be a more audacious offence, than for a man to intoxicate himself till "his mouth poureth out foolishness;" till there is nothing so filthy or blasphemous, which he will not utter?

Besides, it is our duty to mortify all our depraved appetites, and to bring them into subjection to the law of God. What a total violation of this comprehensive obligation is it to strengthen, by intemperate drinking, every evil propensity, and inflame it to the utmost! Yet this is the certain effect of drinking to excess. It provokes to anger, passion, and quarrelling; it begets insolence, and increases pride; it not only often separates between the greatest friends, but hurries them into duels and transports of bloody revenge upon each other. Lustful passions it heats also beyond measure, and gives to lewd desire an unbridled rage.

Now so shameful a violence against reason, so provoking an abuse of plenty, so daring an act of rebellion against God, must, without repentance, certainly exclude every one guilty of it from any share in God's favor, as it demonstrates him to be void of any degree of his grace. Accordingly, we are taught, in different yet most alarming ways, the insupportable doom of drunkards, and of those who inflame themselves with wine. Drunkards are enumerated in the black catalogue of transgressors, who, the apostle solemnly declares to the Corinthians, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. vi. 10.—The dreadful end of self-indulgence in this respect is most emphatically described by our Saviour: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxiv. 48—51.

Not only the train of present evils which intemperance draws after it, but the wages of this shameful iniquity in the eternal world, are revealed in Scripture, to alarm the conscience, and give us full conviction of the sinfulness of this common sin.—So that either we must take heed, and beware of excess in drinking, or give up all reasonable hope of salvation and the favor of God. The thought of losing the favor of God, is worse than death to every one who truly believes the Scripture; every Christian, therefore, however he may naturally incline to drink freely, or be tempted to it by company, or allured to it by a hope of recommending himself to his worldly advantage, will guard against all these temptations, and persevere in an inviolable regard to that sobriety, upon which his safety so much depends.

## SUNDAY XXXI.—CHAP. XXXI.

### ON SELF-DENIAL WITH RESPECT TO IMPURITY.

MAN, in his fallen state, is so constituted, that there is not one natural passion, however useful and excellent it may be when properly regulated, which

does not become an occasion of sin, and require to be resisted and mortified. We have already seen how much this is the case with respect to the appetite for food and drink; the *natural love of the sexes* is another example of the same kind. This impulse, though necessary for the propagation of mankind, and useful in wedlock to several excellent ends, will prove in single persons, unless constantly restrained, a seducer of the soul into much sin, and the cause of the most extensive evil. It prompts some to the commission of secret uncleanness, and precipitates others into the open offence of fornication. At the instigation of this lust, what time, what parts, what influence, are daily prostituted to the shameful business of inveigling and debauching young women! Men of the finest sense and best education, for the poor perishing gratification of an hour, will be guilty of what is shocking to every mind that retains the least fear of God, or compassion for their fellow-creatures: guilty of bringing a heedless virgin to indelible shame, her parents to grief as torturing as it is undeserved and hopeless: guilty of offering the ruined object of their lust such an injury, as if done to a sister, a daughter, or any near relation of their own, they would revenge with the point of the sword. Instigated by lust, they will be accessory even in opening the way to adultery and all its train of mischiefs; for women seldom prove chaste after wedlock, who before it have fallen a prey to lewdness; accessory, as far as lies in their power, in filling the world with whores, at once its plague and scourge; creatures abandoned to every detestable practice, corrupters of youth, pushing them headlong into desperate courses, to pay for their infectious embraces.

These consequences in a greater, or less degree, certainly follow the indulgence of this bodily appetite, to which we are naturally prone. But bad as these consequences are, they compose only the smallest part of the evil produced by fornication.—No pen is able fully to unfold what the soul suffers from this sin. Where any sense of modesty or of duty prevails, it is instantly on the first commission punished with the secret stings and horrors of a guilty mind. By frequent repetition of the crime, all sense of religion is extinguished, and all intercourse with God ceases. Associations with those who are hardened in lewdness are sought after, as a refuge from conscience; till at length the secret offender against chastity contracts a brow of brass, and becomes an infamous pleader for the lust of concupiscence; till, in one word, his conscience is seared, the captive hugs his chains, and glories in his shame.

Add to this catalogue of dreadful evils, the bloody quarrels amongst the lewd, and the murders which they are led to commit; murder of children, yet unborn, loading the mind with guilt, and embittering life beyond conception; murder often of the new-born babe, which the law avenges by the infamous death of its sanguinary parent. Instead, therefore, of saying (as libertines impudently speak) where is the harm of taking a little pleasure out of the way, you will perceive, that thieves and robbers are harmless and honorable compared with the lewd. Injuries from these open foes, have very soon an end, in most instances are borne with ease, and may be redressed; they do not strike at our immortal interest. But the seducer of a female destroys her reputation, tears her away from her family and friends, banishes her from the society of virtuous women, entangles her in the bloom of her years in the snare which will soon drag her down to a condition below brutality, the condition of a prostitute. So that the very mention, or even remembrance of her name, shall afresh excite grief in her family and

relations, grief unassuaged by the least ray of hope in her death, or after-state.

There is indeed little reason to hope that young men will present to themselves such a view as this of the evil of fornication: but it is the inestimable benefit of Scripture, that it is presented to them there in the most striking manner, and by an authority that must not be trifled with. The rise and progress of lewdness, with all the various allurements that lead to it, are there contrasted with its fatal end. The lips of the harlot are painted dropping sweets like the "honey-comb, and her mouth smoother than oil;" but instantly to quench the least rising of a lustful thought, "her end," we are taught of God, "is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword." Prov. v. 3, 4. The simple young man she invites with much fair speech, to take his fill of love till the morning: but immediately the treacherous offer is laid bare, and under the thin veil of one night's pleasure, an injured body with an upbraiding conscience is discovered pouring out that sad confession, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof!"

To finish the testimony of God's abhorrence of the sin of fornication published in the Old Testament, let it be observed, that it was made a capital offence, by the sentence of his own law; and the most abominable of vices is itself included in the same prohibition with that of fornication; designing, I apprehend, to teach us to what horrid lengths lewdness, indulged, will lead, and to create a dread of that sin, which is forbidden together with one so infamous; "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a Sodomite of the sons of Israel." Deut. xxii. 21.

I have been full in producing the law of God in old time against the sin of fornication, in order to silence the ignorance of some who are foolish enough to wax bold in their lewdness, vaunting that there is only a passage or two in the New Testament positive in condemning their darling lust.

Indeed were it so, this would be sufficient; for till the New Testament is proved a forgery (which is impossible,) every injunction it contains claims an equal regard with any thing delivered before from God; since his declaration alone is such a sanction as stands in no need of any prior revelation to enforce it.

But instead of a passage or two only in the New Testament, as some pretend, absolutely condemning fornication, it is not possible to name a sin (that of contempt of Christ excepted) which is so generally mentioned in Scripture, or so constantly marked as the object of God's wrath. Not only our Redeemer and Judge ranks this with sins of the most malignant kind, and as a peculiar provocation of divine wrath, Matt. xv. 19. Mark xvii. 21. but his great apostle scarcely writes a single epistle without some alarming prohibition against it. In one place St. Paul beautifully opposes the benevolent gratification of our natural appetite in a lawful way, to the terrible condition of those who are engaged in lewd commerce; "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. xiii. 4. In another, he not only affirms that adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, and uncleanness, "are the works of the flesh," the fruit of our corrupted nature; but, with remarkable vehemence, he presses us to lay it to heart as a most certain truth, that each of these sins is absolutely inconsistent with a state of salvation; "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. v. 21.

Such is the light and power accompanying the gospel, wherever duly received, that, in the judgment of the apostle, it should put an end to the very



being of this enormity within the pale of the Christian church: "Fornication and all uncleanness—let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints—for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person—hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Eph. v. 3, 5. And lest the plausible ways of talking in defence of lewdness, in which debauched men of parts are very expert, should stagger any weak believer, and seduce him to imagine that fornication may be practised with impunity, this awful caution is given: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be ye not therefore partakers with them." Eph. v. 6, 7. The same doctrine is as strongly inculcated upon the Christians at Colosse, and those at Thessalonica, in the following ample manner: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification; that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God; for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth" (what is said of the evil and danger of fornication, and of the absolute necessity of purity,) "despiseth not man, but God."

St. John, taught by the inspiration of God, exposes no less clearly the greatness of the sin of fornication: for whoremongers, he declares are shut out of the gates of the heavenly city. Rev. xxii. 15.—Whoremongers have their part assigned them "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. xxi. 8.

But of all the Scriptures written on purpose to inspire an horror of fornication, those animated interrogations to the believers at Corinth are most striking; "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" Do you not profess to belong to him, and that he is your life-giving head?—"Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid." Would it not be monstrous to make such a vile use of them as to alienate them from his service, and, rending them off as it were from him, to turn them into the members of a lewd woman, by committing whoredom with her? "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. Appropriated to God, you have no right to abuse your bodies by gratifying a brutal desire of pleasure. This is the worst kind of sacrilege: this the most dreadful of all profanations, the turning what is consecrated a temple for the living God into an habitation for the spirit of uncleanness.

Know therefore, that you must either become apostate from the Christian faith, renouncing every hope of finding mercy from God, or you must mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness; and be fully persuaded, that this sin alone, supposing it were possible to subsist with the discharge of Christian duty in other respects, would drown the soul in perdition. For this fullness of persuasion of the evil and sinfulness of fornication is of great use to secure you in the early and most important season of life, from what is generally the first instance of premeditated rebellion against God; the first means of rivetting on the sinner that chain, which drags down its thousands and ten thousands to the prison of hell.

Further; wherever any end is proposed, or duty enjoined, the means necessary to maintain the one, and to perform the other, are tacitly included in the general precept; and whatever in itself renders the practice of the duty very precarious, is virtually forbidden where it can be avoided. Now from this

most evident principle, a Christian is obliged to carry his self-denial much farther than a mere abstinence from the gross acts of fornication or uncleanness; for this may be done when there is no chastity; nothing more than a prudential continency. A Christian must resolutely shun all representations to the eye, and every thing that by the medium of the senses can be offered to his mind, exciting impure desire, or defiling the imagination. Thus the chastity of Job is expressed by his making a covenant with his eyes, absolutely to check them from gazing on any inflaming object: and our Lord brands as the adultery of the heart, the "looking upon a woman to lust after her." In short, the same divine authority which condemns all gross lewdness, condemns every species and appearance of it also in word or thought.

Here then behold a noble province for Christian self-denial opens! here the spiritual warfare, in which every believer in Jesus is daily engaged, becomes most visible; most visible in opposing all the licensed honorable ways invented by the world, to gratify the lewdness of the heart. In the number of these licensed and honorable ways of cherishing defilement, are all wanton glances of the eye, that mirror of the mind, the singing soft and amorous songs, double-entendres, mixed dances, reading novels, and above every thing, frequenting the play-house. For in this innocent amusement, as the world will have it called, in defiance of our holy faith, our reason and experience—in this innocent amusement, whatever can corrupt the mind is set off to the greatest advantage. Is there a lewd allusion, or stroke of impure wit? the air, the voice of the actor labor to give it the highest emphasis: while the greater part of the audience loudly applaud the entertainment. Nay, if by chance some piece should gain admittance on the stage, free from a filthy tincture, the house must still have their prurient humor gratified by an epilogue, or farce, full of innuendos; intimating that the baseness of the human race must stand or fall with those things they know naturally and as brute beasts.

Now to live in the world, and thus in direct opposition to its favorite taste, to preserve true chastity of mind, is a fruit of faith in Christ, and a part of self-denial indispensably required from all Christians.

## SUNDAY XXXII.—CHAP. XXXII.

ON SELF-DENIAL, WITH RESPECT TO THE DESIRE OF WEALTH, THE INORDINATE AFFECTION FOR THINGS LAWFUL, AND THE LOVE OF PRAISE.

It is a remarkable proof of the corruption of human nature that all the passions which are natural to the human race, require to be restrained and mortified. If we look into the world, we do not find men in general so impressed by love to God, by delight in spiritual things, by ardent benevolence, that attention and caution are required lest those virtues should be carried to excess (if there could be excess in them,) and lest the business of this life should be neglected. As the bias lies on the other side, the danger is, lest Religion should be neglected; lest the love of the world and the lusts of the flesh should be cherished. Religion therefore supposes human nature to be corrupt. It is in fact nothing but a system of restraint upon man: it prevents his doing what he is strongly inclined to do, and requires him to do what else he would not think of performing. We have already seen how much self-denial is requisite with respect to the natural appetite for food, and the love of women; we now observe

thirdly, that corrupt self must be denied in its propensity to *covetousness*.

This propensity to love money it is the duty of a Christian to resist in its first workings: for it is entirely opposite to the temper of mind required in a Christian, and it is declared by Scripture to be ruinous to the soul wherever it prevails.

It is opposite to the temper of mind required in a Christian, for he is called to seek after a better, that is, a heavenly country, and to stand always ready for an immediate separation from all things visible. But the propensity to covetousness, unless denied, will, on the contrary, utterly benumb all feeling of futurity, suffering him to think of nothing with frequency or earnestness, but wealth and its present advantages. It will possess his mind with a strong delusion, that money is the chief good of man on earth; and utterly exclude all just apprehensions of the religion which cometh from God, whose characteristic is, that it overcometh all worldly lust.

The gospel makes the truth and substance of religion to be a firm trust in God, and a delight in him as our chief happiness. But Avarice says unto gold, "Thou art my confidence; thou art the god, whose presence brings with it the greatest blessing, and whose absence is the greatest curse." The gospel is given on purpose to raise our desires with increasing fervor towards God, to fix our affections with immovable steadfastness on things above, and to engage us in the constant pursuit of them with an ardor in some degree suited to their worth. The covetous person, by making wealth the object of his chief desire, has no warmth of affection left for God, he retains nothing more than the husk of heartless duties; he forms no idea of the blessedness of being with God in any other view than as a sort of refuge, when death comes, and riches can be no longer possessed.

And to mention no more instances of the contrariety of a covetous spirit to the state of a real believer; it hardens the heart towards our fellow-creatures, and, either from a fear of lessening our treasure, or a desire of increasing it, will construe charity to be a low subordinate duty, and leave our neighbor, partaker of our own flesh, to struggle with sickness and with want, and to perish unassisted. Directly opposite to this selfish one is the disposition of a Christian: he is ready to give, and glad to distribute, putting on bowels of mercy, and feeling love unfeigned. He remembers with joy, that it is the will of God that those who are rich should give plentifully, as stewards and not proprietors of their wealth; that thus the great abundance of some may prove a supply to the want of others; that those who have much should have nothing over, and they that have nothing should feel no lack.

In this view, the contrariety of covetousness to the temper of a Christian, respecting either God or man, is most evident, and by consequence the duty of self-denial, in withstanding every motion we feel tending towards covetousness in our own breasts.

To enforce this self-denial, it is necessary to consider further the Scripture representation of covetousness, as a temper ruinous to the soul.

And here it is remarkable that the covetousness against which we are so earnestly warned in God's word, is not of the kind, generally deemed scandalous, but such as may govern the heart of a man, who is esteemed virtuous and excellent by the world. In the tenth Psalm, the covetous, whom the Lord is there said to abhor, are the very persons of whom the wicked speak well; which could never be the case, did their love of money make them either villanous in their practice, or miserably penurious in their temper; for men of this stamp none commend. The same thing is observable in that solemn caution given by our Redeemer; "Take

heed, and beware of covetousness." By which it is evident that he meant no more than a desire, springing from a rooted persuasion, that the comfort of life consists in abundance, to be rich: this was the covetousness our Lord condemns. And that his admonition might sink the deeper, he represents the workings of that avarice which he condemns in a case which passes every day before our eyes. It is this; a man grows rich in his business, not through fraud or extortion, but by the blessing of God upon his own labor and skill. As is usual, he is highly delighted with his success; he exults in the prospect of being master, in a few years, of an independent fortune! In the meantime he is determined to be frugal and diligent, till he takes his final leave of business, to enjoy all the sweets of ease and splendor. Luke xii. 19. Now, who, that are governed by the common maxims and principles of human nature, can see any thing to blame in this man's sentiment or conduct? Is it not what they applaud and imitate themselves? Yet this very man our Lord sets before our eyes as the picture of one engrossed by a covetous desire of the things of this world. This very man he represents as summoned, in the midst of all his golden hopes, to appear a guilty criminal at the bar of his Maker. Lo! this is the man whom our Lord exposes as a miserable wretch for all others to take warning by, and resist covetousness. "So," such a fool and such a sinner as this, "is he that layeth up treasure for himself;" that is, every earthly-minded man, who seeks after wealth, as if it were the foundation of happiness; "and is not rich towards God;" rich in faith, hope, and holiness. Luke xii. 21.

St. Paul, in perfect harmony with his Lord, forbids the desire of wealth as a criminal effect of avarice. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii. 5. And where, instead of this self-denied temper, a desire of increasing in wealth is cherished, there snares, defilement, and ruin, are declared to be the certain consequences. For, "they that will," the original signifies the simple desire, "be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

Now, however easy it may seem to despise that sordid spirit of avarice, which only meets with contempt from the world; the accumulation of riches by every dirty method, and, for fear of expense, the refusal afterward to make any use of them! yet to resist the workings of covetousness, according to the Scripture definition of that depraved disposition, must be confessed to be a most heroic instance of self-denial. For suppose men to be engaged in business, how strong are their natural fears of failing, and their desire to prosper! how dependent must they be at first on those who employ them! Consider the constant language of the world in calling wealth a blessing and a reward; its custom of treating men with respect, and paying court to them, exactly in proportion to their monied worth; weigh these things, and then say whether any thing can be more contrary to our natural selfishness, than to renounce all love of money? than to be quite satisfied with using constant industry and all our skill, which God commands us to do, in our trade or profession, and when that is done to cast all our care upon him, cheerfully leaving it to his own most wise and gracious will in what degree we shall grow rich, or whether ever at all; assured that if we dwell in the land and are doing good, by a uniform subjection to



God's word, he will bring it to pass, that upon the whole our condition shall be appointed to us in richest mercy? What more difficult self-denial can be conceived, than to live in the temple of the god of riches (as this world may too justly be called,) hearing high and low, priests and people, all paying their adoration to this Mammon of unrighteousness, and yet remain uninfected by thirst for money? This can be obtained only by unintermitted discipline exercised over our own hearts, and by possession of the true riches in the knowledge of God and Christ.

If it should be said, Do you mean then to affirm, that it is wrong for any man to rise to a state of great wealth? The Scripture, I answer, condemns only the desire of riches and the passion for them, as defiling and sinful. Therefore, if whilst your whole heart is given to God, he is pleased to prosper whatever you take in hand, and to give you an abundant increase; then your wealth is evidently as much the gift of God, as if it came to you by legacy or inheritance.

*Fourthly*, Self must be denied also in the use and enjoyment even of *things lawful*. Intemperance, lewdness, and covetousness, are in every degree defiling and sinful: nothing can be urged in their defence by those who will reason justly, or who believe sincerely the word of God. But when we have subdued these corruptions of the heart, there still remains much exercise for self-denial with respect to the comforts and conveniences we possess. We must be careful to use them as not to abuse them.—We must keep our hearts disengaged from those temporal blessings which have no intrinsic worth, and which others, better than ourselves, often want. By this self-denial we shall receive all the benefit outward comforts were intended to confer on their possessors, without putting our peace in their power, in case the providence of God should deprive us of them. Now, considering how very uncertain all our outward comforts are, and how impossible to be absolutely secured to us for any time, to sit loose towards them is certainly wise and necessary.

Amongst these lawful things in which self must be denied, our nearest and dearest relations are included. For though much love is due to them, and a tenderness of affection which will make our connection a source of true pleasure, still God alone must possess the supreme place in our hearts. But unless we are much upon our guard, and very jealous of ourselves, where we love as we ought, we shall soon love as we ought not. The affection which should be kept subordinate, will entrench upon what we owe to God, and render us by degrees cold towards him. What neither intemperance, nor lust, nor covetousness could effect, a passionate fondness for a husband, a wife, or a child will often produce. It will alienate the affections from God, by substituting an idol in his place; an idol which we shall more studiously seek to please, and be more fearful to offend, than our God: an idol, in whose precarious life all our happiness will centre, and whose death will prove a stroke too heavy to bear with Christian submission.

The danger of this inordinate affection is mentioned in Scripture, and self-denial in this instance is peculiarly enjoined. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children," that is, so far as they would interfere with a supreme affection for Christ, and hinder faithfulness in his service; if he does not as much renounce all fondness for them, as if he had an actual hatred towards their persons, "he cannot be my disciple;" he cannot stand when brought to the fiery trial; and though that should never be the case, his heart cannot be whole with me. Luke xiv. 26.

The same doctrine of self-denial is inculcated by

St. Paul, and founded upon an abiding reason.—"Brethren," says he, "the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. Short-lived as we are ourselves, and still shorter in duration as our best earthly comforts so often prove, we only act according to the truth of our condition, as well as in obedience to God, when we limit our affections towards them.—Thus we shall still be happy in a separation from them, no less than in their possession. God, who is without any variableness, will be our joy, and the failure of the cisterns too many hew out for themselves, will the more enhance to us the Fountain of living waters. To perceive the excellency of being thus disengaged from inordinate affection towards objects which it is not unlawful to regard with peculiar love; look upon the fond mother, stupid and dumb with grief, like Rachel, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not; observe the settled melancholy by which thousands are oppressed, through a separation from the husband or wife of their youth, with whom they promised themselves a length of joyous years. Behold all their happiness shivered in pieces, all interred with the idol on which they doted! The whole creation is now become as the barren wilderness, and no prospect of ease before them, but in the gloomy thought of dying soon themselves.

Consider this afflicting scene occurring daily, and you will be compelled to own that no self-denial can be more reasonable or more necessary, than that of suppressing all inordinate affection towards those dear objects which may be torn in a moment from us: and which, when delighted in beyond measure, are sure to pierce us far more deeply with anguish by their loss, than they ever could repay our excessive love with joy by their presence.

*Fifthly*, Corrupt self must be denied in our love of the *praise of men*. It is evident, that unless something nobler than what earth can give, be the grand object of pursuit, the praise of men is as delightful to the mind as sounds exquisitely harmonious are to the ear, or the most delicious flavors to the taste.—The heathens avowed the love of praise to be the spring of all that gave a lustre to their names.—Thus Themistocles owned, that being pointed at in the public meetings, afforded him a pleasure which amply rewarded him for all the great exploits he had done for his country. And Tully is not ashamed to publish to the whole world his vanity, that he rose up in defence of Rome against her unnatural conspirators, not from a spirit of patriotism, but to erect to himself a monument of glory. The same principle gave birth to the austerities of the Pharisees, and to the duties of religion they performed; all their works they did to be seen of men. That in this respect human nature is always the same, is evident from the pain men feel whenever they meet with expressions of disgrace and scorn; how keenly do they pierce, how greatly provoke! It is evident also from the visible pleasure with which men generally listen to their own commendation, and incite every designing flatterer to offer them his incense.

Now this strong innate love of the praise of men, it is the duty of a Christian to deny. He must not suffer it to direct his actions. Were so false a principle to govern him, the judgment of the world would be his rule of life, in contempt of God his Maker and his Judge. He would judge of the extent of his duty, not from the plain command of God, but from what was reputable or otherwise. What will the world think of me? would be an alarming suggestion, fa-

tal to every purpose of living as a real Christian; and the fear of an appearance of enthusiasm in abstaining from fashionable vices, would reconcile him to practices glaringly opposite to his duty.—Whatever knowledge and conviction of the truth he might have more than others, fondness for applause from men would compel him to hold the truth in unrighteousness, and to be worse, even in spite of his convictions, than the world, in order to enjoy its approbation.

Now these instructions come strongly in aid of a sense of duty, to love the praise of God, and to seek only that honor that cometh from him. They are of great efficacy to cool the heart, that would otherwise burn for reputation. And whilst Christians are only studying to be found approved of God, their "eye being" thus "single; their whole body," according to that gracious promise, Luke xi. 34. will be "full of light," of the light of truth, holiness, and comfort: in this they will enjoy more than a counterbalance to the loss of human praise, more than a recompense for all aspersions cast upon their understanding, choice, and conduct.

### SUNDAY XXXIII.—CHAP. XXXIII.

ON SELF-DENIAL WITH RESPECT TO SHAME, OR LOSS  
ON ACCOUNT OF RELIGION, PRIDE OF REASON, AND  
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

WE have seen the necessity of exercising self-denial with respect to our sensual appetites, with respect also to the inclinations natural to man, for wealth, the comforts of life, and the praise of our fellow-creatures:—Religion, which teaches us the necessity of self-denial in general, is itself the occasion of opening to us a new scene for its exercise: it creates new duties, and requires self-denial in cases which do not come within the notice of the world in general. Thus the profession of a higher degree of religion than is common in the world, subjects us to a loss of reputation, to bear which, without being ashamed or hurt, will require no trifling exertion of self-denial. We all naturally follow the custom and fashion of the world around us, and though not fired with the love of fame, we still feel it grievous to be reproached as bigots, fools, or enthusiasts. When therefore we observe that our attachment to Scripture principles, in condemnation of corrupt practices and fashionable errors, will render us disagreeable and unfit for the company of the polite; pride will begin strongly to urge us to dissemble, and not to appear more attached to religion than others: it will be swaying us to seem at least to approve what all the company approves, though we condemn it in our hearts.—Therefore,

*Sixthly, This evil shame, in all its workings, must be denied; because nothing can be more base, more encouraging to wickedness, or more destructive to our own souls.*

Nothing can be more base than such a dastardly obsequiousness to the opinions of men; since, besides the reigning cowardice it betrays, what a return is this for the inestimable blessing of the knowledge of the truth? Was it for this end, do you think, that God gives to you the knowledge of his truth, to which others are strangers, only that you might show him the greater indignity, by preferring to his favor your reputation? Was the light of life kindled within you, that you should industriously conceal it, choosing to appear dark in your understanding, rather than bear the censure or ridicule of those, who you well know are enemies to the light, only because their deeds are evil? Were an officer to be found thus ashamed of his king or his service, how must he appear? yet what

fidelity does he owe to his king, or what advantages does he receive in his service, worthy to be named with the benefits God pours out upon us? Hence both gratitude and justice require us all, as far as we know the truth and our duty towards God, to avow religion, and not to be ashamed of being counted righteous over-much by those who neither have nor can bear more than the senseless form of godliness.

*Seventhly, Self-denial must be exercised with respect to the fear of suffering for the sake of God and his truth.* In the inferior ranks of life all persons are called, more or less, to this exercise, through their necessary dependence upon the rich. For when a person begins business, or enters upon his profession of law, physic, or divinity, how desirable is the favor of the great and opulent to him! to have their smile, to be admitted a guest at their table, is deemed an honor; and whilst their interest procures preferment, their custom brings the tradesman the largest return of gain. Hence a violent temptation arises, to be esteemed no more religious than is agreeable to the rich, or to their principal domestics, on whose favor so much depends. Are they therefore profane? every dependent will be tempted to say, why should I appear a friend to godliness? Are they lewd and intemperate? why should I hurt my interest by refusing to join with them in excess of wine, or in lasciviousness, or by appearing to condemn such vile practices? Should conscience remonstrate, self-interest will lead a man industriously to stifle every conviction, afraid of losing the best of his customers, or his only patron, by being offensively religious.

Every one knows how much the principal inhabitants in all places keep their inferiors in awe by the tie of worldly gain: and where their example is profane, they spread on every side a dreadful contagion.

In such a situation, Christian self-denial displays its energy. The believer will dare to show a conscientious regard to the law and truth of God in the view of his superiors, though sensible that his conduct will gail and irritate. Fear of poverty will not make him belie his better judgment, or deny his God in order to gain favor with men. And whilst discretion and humility, on one hand, set bounds to his advice or reproof, and direct him as to the time and manner of applying them, his fear and love of God, on the other, will certainly lead him to discover his true character, and his abhorrence of all iniquity.

The weight which eternal things have upon the believer's mind, the sting which he has often felt in his conscience for seeming to approve what God condemns, the express command to make a public profession of godliness, and the disinterested manner in which the Redeemer has suffered to purchase his everlasting salvation, all join their influence, and are of great force to enable him to risk the loss of all things, sooner than be ashamed of God and his word.

*Eighthly, Self-denial must be exercised with respect to the pride of reason, in submitting without disputing to the written word of God.* A kind of restraint this no less difficult for men of superior understanding to practise, than for the sensual to be chaste, or the covetous charitable. Yet in requiring such submission to his bare authority, God requires from us nothing unreasonable; because the objects he reveals to us are both above human comprehension, and at present only revealed in part. "We preach," saith the apostle, "the wisdom of God in a mystery;" and therefore the doctrines of Scripture must not be rejected, under a pretence that they contradict common sense. Instead of indulging, we must repel that insolent query, How



can these things be? For, as ignorant creatures, it is our duty, and as Christians, our profession, to rest satisfied with what God has declared to be the truth. When this declaration is once known, we are to shut our eyes against numberless difficulties relating to the truth, which human wit or human ignorance may start. This is our duty, though infinitely mortifying to the proud and arrogant. This is also rational; for how can any one reasonably deny that to be truth, if it involves no palpable contradiction, which hath this decisive evidence, that God in his revelation has declared it. And how can any one be sure that there is a real contradiction in things, which it is confessed he cannot thoroughly comprehend. Though reason therefore is of signal service in teaching us, to a certain degree, the knowledge of causes and effects; and, within its proper limits, not to be disparaged; yet, when it is puffed up with a false conceit of its own power, it must be mortified, no less than any other depraved part of our frame. Otherwise we shall soon think ourselves at liberty to disdain implicit faith even in God himself. Instead of proving doctrines to be unscriptural, it will lead us to urge their apparent absurdity as sufficient reason to reject them. Thus one part of revealed truth after another will be renounced: first the Trinity, then the doctrine of Christ's atonement, next our fall and natural corruption; till at length there will be nothing in the Bible allowed to be true, but what a pagan might subscribe, and a deist receive.

The absolute necessity of this submission of the understanding to the authority of God's revelation is most evident. A man cannot be a Christian without it; since all the doctrines which by way of distinction are called Christian, have confessedly great difficulties in them. From our fall in Adam, to the complete salvation of the soul by Christ at the last day, there is abundant room to cavil, if men choose to erect themselves into judges upon the counsel of God. A small degree of wit with much pride, will furnish endless matter for arraigning the Scripture in its account of the origin of our misery; in the character it gives of the Redeemer and his incarnation; in the way of receiving benefit from him; in the Spirit's influence on the heart; in the penalty denounced upon every degree of disobedience, and the punishment of the damned. These several important articles of our creed, which are the very soul of Christianity, must be received upon the mere credit of their voucher, the word of God.—And those who disdain to be persuaded by such evidence, do in fact give up the faith of Christ, though it may be convenient for them to retain the name of Christians, and to remain in the bosom of Christ's church.

*Lastly*, Self-denial must be exercised with respect to our opinion of our *own righteousness*; a severer instance of mortification to all than any yet mentioned. But it must be submitted to. Whatever our good qualities are, we must confess ourselves criminals before God, whose condemnation would be inevitable, should he execute justice instead of showing compassion towards us. How is it possible we can honor the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, as God would have it honored, if we imagine our goodness can absolve us from guilt? how can we flee for refuge to the Saviour, unless our hearts condemn us as lost without his merit? or how abide in this city of refuge unless we perceive ourselves exposed to the avenger of blood? how can we bow down in self-abasing gratitude to God, for imputing to us the righteousness of another, if we renounce not our own as utterly insufficient to answer for us? how place our full dependence on the Beloved of the Father for acceptance through him, unless we are conscious of the defilement of our corrupt na-

ture, cleaving to us to the very last moment of life on earth, and rendering us in ourselves unworthy of notice from God?

Upon all these accounts it is a necessary part of Christian self-denial to renounce all confidence in our own virtues and attainments, as if they could justify us in the sight of God, or bear the trial of his holy law. This kind of self-denial, directly opposite to every earth-born system of religion, is of the essence of the religion of Jesus. And though this very humbling estimation of our moral excellence be most difficult to attain, yet Scripture, both by example and doctrine, strongly urges it upon us.—Thus Job, in the bitterness of self-reproach, cries out, "Behold, I am vile, I abhor myself. Upon inquiry into the character of this complainer against himself, we learn that he had no equal in goodness upon the whole earth, even in the judgment of the Omniscient; but the fault which he here bewailed, and the guilt that extorted this confession, was too high an opinion of his own character; he had said, "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me." Job xxxiii. 9. For thus overrating his spiritual attainments Job abhors himself. And who, after Job, that receives the Scripture record, shall think himself less sullied in his character, or less defective in point of practical holiness, than this illustrious servant of God?

What Job was in old time, St. Paul appears to have been under the New Testament. For who in labors or in sufferings for the glory of God and the good of man; who in purity of heart, and extensive usefulness, was to be compared to him? Yet so far was this most distinguished saint from confiding in his own goodness as a fit object of the divine complacency, that he mentions both what he had attained in moral and religious obedience, and what he had suffered for Christ's sake, on purpose that he might pour contempt upon it all; that he might call it "loss and dung" in comparison of being found in Christ, "not having his own righteousness, which is of the law," that is, not trusting in his own personal obedience for justification before God, "but having that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9.

What these and others of the most excellent of the earth, by their own confession, declare in discouragement of human righteousness, as a title to justification before God, or as a ground of self-conceit, is confirmed by many places of Scripture.—Thus the poor and needy are represented as the only objects of the Redeemer's grace. Psal. lxxii. 13. whilst the good and virtuous in their own sight, "are scattered in the proud imaginations of their hearts, and sent empty away." Luke i. 51. Lowliness of mind is described as the only temper becoming our Christian profession; whilst the haughtiness which prompts men to plead their own righteousness as a title to God's favor, is exposed as the cause of excluding from salvation those who had even a zeal for God. Rom. ix.

Both by doctrine and example, therefore, the disciple of Jesus is led to call himself vile in the midst of his highest attainments, and constantly to regard himself as a needy impotent vessel of mercy, who has nothing to boast of but the name of the Lord, and no ground of confidence towards God, but his righteousness only.

## SUNDAY XXXIV.—CHAP. XXXIV.

ON PRAYER—ITS OBJECT, NATURE, AND SUBJECT.

WHENEVER the practice and tempers essential to believers in Christ Jesus are explained, many, in-

stead of attempting to acquire them, object, If these be absolutely requisite, who then shall be saved? But there is really no place for this responding objection in the Christian scheme; because, though the natural weakness and corruption of man is much greater than such objectors believe, still the obedience required as the fruit of faith, grows from a root which is able to produce it: for such light and power are promised by God to all who properly seek them, as are very adequate to maintain all Christian tempers in the measure indispensably required.

The means, which must be diligently used in order to obtain the continuance of those supernatural supplies, are by way of distinction called Devotional Duties; and they are so essential to religion, that it cannot subsist without them. Their importance is indeed generally allowed, yet through sad abuse these exercises are frequently turned into a mere religious formality, by which God is dishonored, nominal Christians lulled into a false peace, and the profane hardened in their contempt of devotion.

To guard against this error, so pernicious to the Christian church, I shall treat at large on the nature of devotional duties, and the proper method of discharging them; principally confining myself to treat of secret prayer, and reading the word of God; leaving it to the reader to apply what is said of them to all the other public ordinances and means of grace.

1. With respect to *prayer*, the object of it is God only. The end of prayer is, to obtain deliverance or preservation from evil, or the possession and continuance of good. Our application therefore must be made to him, who is the Almighty Source of every good and perfect gift; who orders all things according to the counsel of his own will; who, in spite of all opposition, can completely bless us: and without whose favor every being in the whole creation, though leagued in our defence, could afford us no protection. He also to whom prayer is addressed must be omniscient and omnipresent. Otherwise, how is it possible that amidst so many constant supplicants none should be overlooked; amidst so many millions of petitions offered up in the same instant throughout the world, none be lost; amidst such a numberless variety of complicated cases, the things best for each individual, and those only, should be conferred. The most transcendent mercy and love also ought to be inherent in him to whom we offer our prayers, in order to forgive our sins, to overcome our fears, and to encourage our petitions, conscious as we must be of our own vileness, when we are most fit to pray.

2. Now as God is the only object of prayer, so its nature consists in offering up to him the wants of the heart. Unless the heart is engaged, the best chosen petitions, punctually repeated morning and evening out of a book, or the most fluent addresses in language of our own conception, are no more than the mimicry of prayer: a sort of devotion, which pride and self-sufficiency can practise; on which formality and superstition can erect their absurd pretences to religion, whilst the spirit and the truth of prayer are unexperienced and neglected. For as the needy only can stoop to ask the relief of an alms, so then we only can begin to pray when we feel ourselves necessitous creatures; when we long to receive from God what we beg of him, knowing that without the gift of it we must be miserable.

This sensibility of our real want, both Scripture representations and Scripture examples prove essential to true prayer. The Scripture representations instruct us thus; "If thou shalt seek the Lord, thou shalt find him; if thou seekest him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Deut. iv. 9.—

"Trust in God at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him." Psal. lxi. 8. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." Psal. cxlv. 18. When the inspired Solomon exhorts us to pray for spiritual wisdom, he takes care to mark, with the utmost energy of expression, the need we must at the same time feel of it in our hearts: "If thou criest," says he, "after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures." Prov. ii. 3, 4. The same feeling of our wants our Lord points out as essential to prayer, describing it by the united terms of asking, seeking, knocking; terms most expressive of an urgent need of immediate succor. And St. James leads us to the very same conception of the thing, by ascribing success to fervent prayer. James v. 16.

What the Scripture thus defines to be prayer, is fully illustrated by the practice of the most approved servants of God recorded in it. They were penetrated with a feeling of their necessities, when they came before the throne of grace. "With my whole heart," says one, "have I sought thy favor." "At evening, and at morning, and at noon-day will I cry unto thee, and that instantly," says David, "and thou shalt hear me." Another makes his supplication with all the heart-felt importunity of a distressed petitioner; "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication."—In the address also of Daniel the greatly beloved, every syllable breathes a sense of want, which scarcely knows how to bear with denial or delay; "O Lord," says he, "hear, O Lord, forgive, O Lord, hearken and do, defer not for thy name's sake, O my God."

From this Scripture representation of prayer, that it is the want of the heart offered up to God, it appears plain, that all men naturally stand upon a level with respect to their ability of praying truly. Outward circumstances in this case makes no difference. The ignorant clown and the polished scholar, those who have been most piously trained, and those who have been miserably neglected in their education, those who have been restrained from sinful excesses, and those who have plunged the deepest into them, remain alike incapable, without the grace of God, of real prayer. Notwithstanding the grossest ignorance, the worst education, and the most profligate life, yet as soon as ever the guilt, and strength, and tyranny of sin, are felt to oppress the soul, we shall flee to God for refuge, and prayers and cries, like incense, will ascend up before him from the troubled and the humbled heart. On the contrary, if the guilt, the strength, and defilement of sin are not felt and lamented, neither learning, nor the most pious education, nor abstinence from every gross vice, nor even all these united, can create the least measure of the spirit of prayer. In many instances these advantages flatter and blind with their specious appearance, instead of producing any just sensibility of the guilt of sin, or any alarming apprehension of its issue, unless pardoned and subdued. In fact, all true knowledge, and all just apprehensions of sin, wherever found, are owing to an infinitely higher cause: they are the effect of a firm belief in God's word declaring the sinfulness of sin, and of a heart humbled so as to plead guilty to the charge of it. But this firm belief of God's word, and this conviction of sin, are in no instance the fruits of education, much less the effect of learning, but the inestimable gifts of God: gifts no sooner received, than all the impediments to prayer are removed. Want will immediately make the stammering tongue of the most unlearned, or of those who have been in time past the most



abominably wicked, speak plain enough in the ears of God. Want will make the heart, which was before too gross to conceive any excellency in the things of God, seek after them with strong cries and lasting importunity. And whatever difference a good understanding, a pious education, or general abstinence from vice (which are on other accounts, invaluable blessings) may make in the matter of confession, in the degree of guilt, or in the choice of devout phrases, still the prayer, by which God is honored and the soul blessed, will be exactly the same in the little sinner as in the great, in the poor as in the rich, in the very lowest and weakest of the people, as in the most accomplished preacher of God's truth.

3. From the nature of prayer, we are led to consider the subject of it, or what it is we are to ask of God. Certainly it must be what it becomes him to supply, what we are warranted by his own word to request, and assured by his own promise either absolutely, or with some limitation, that he will grant.

We may ask temporal blessing: for instance, ease when we are racked with pain, health when taken off from our employment by languishing sickness, or maintenance when we are left destitute. We may ask the continuance of our own lives and those of our dearest relations when sick, or in danger of death. For each of these benefits, prayer may be made to God, because instances of each kind are recorded in Scripture; because by prayer for them God is exalted as the sovereign Lord both of life and all its comforts; our dependence upon him as such is confirmed, and our gratitude towards him is increased.

But though we may pray for any of these benefits, we must always do it with entire submission to the will of God, whether he sees it best to give, to continue, or remove them. We should always remember that things of this kind are not promised without limitation, but only upon condition that they are for our good, and for the glory of God.—We should ask for them with a sense upon our hearts, that ease, health, maintenance, friends, and life itself, are things unspeakably mean, compared to spiritual and eternal blessings.

Blessings of a spiritual and eternal nature must therefore make up the principal subject matter of the prayer of Christians. Let them request more knowledge of the Lord that bought them, more dependence upon his name, pardon of their sins through his blood, mortification of their vile affections through his Spirit, and a more perfect conformity to his example.

## SUNDAY XXXV.—CHAP. XXXV.

### THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

THE object, the nature, and the subject of true prayer have already been considered: but ignorance, alas! in this case is but the weakest obstacle with which we have to contend; the natural profaneness of the human heart, and its aversion to every truly spiritual exercise, are far more difficult to overcome. However, for this purpose let us consider in what manner the holy Scripture expresses the necessity of prayer.

It is enforced there by the practice of the most venerable persons; it is laid down as the indispensable means of obtaining grace; it is required by the express command of the Lord God Almighty.

It is enforced by the most venerable names; for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David, Daniel, Peter, and Paul, in a word, all those who stand the highest of the human race for their excellency in the sight of God, were most eminent and abundant in the exercise of prayer; by this their graces were

enlivened and brightened to superior lustre. Now their diligence in prayer is recorded, not for their sakes, to give them the trifling honor of a posthumous fame, but for a substantial use as patterns whom we are to copy; that if we hope to dwell with them in the end, we should walk in their good paths, and be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. So that whilst we have any real reverence for the word of God, it is impossible we should neglect and think slightly of a duty, which was of such unspeakable importance in the judgment of the chief saints of God.

But if the example of all the Scripture saints proves the necessity of prayer, how much more the practice of the Saviour, before the brightness of whose glory, prophets, apostles, and martyrs are eclipsed, as the stars in the firmament by the rising sun. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; nevertheless prayer still employed a considerable portion of his time. Fatigued as he was wont to be by travelling from place to place to preach the gospel, and thronged by crowds who pressed upon him to hear the gracious words which proceeded out of his lips, always therefore in need of the rest of the whole night; yet would he sometimes rise up a great while before it was day, to retire to a mountain or solitary place apart to pray; sometimes the moon and the stars beheld him through the whole night an earnest supplicant and devout intercessor, whilst the rest of the world were taking their full rest in their beds.

After this record, can any one, professing himself a Christian, admit a doubt of the absolute necessity of prayer? If the master of the house, who had no guile nor the slightest stain of depravity, prayed, how much more must they of his household, who are both weak and wicked? If the Lord from heaven, when he took upon him our flesh, lifted up his eyes and prayed, how much more must his servants? Should any one imagine himself excused from this duty, what stronger reproof need to be given to his audacious impiety, than to reply—The prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, Jesus himself, our Redeemer, prayed: whom makest thou thyself?

Every one therefore who despises this channel in which God sees fit to convey to the soul its necessary supplies for eternal life, through a confidence in the sufficiency of his own strength, in the excellency of his virtues, or in the finished work of Christ, must unavoidably remain under the power and guilt of sin. His fancied goodness, in which he confides, will necessarily be scanty and partial: some ruling passion will still prevail over him, witnessing the impossibility of attaining real righteousness without divine aid.

*Lastly*, The absolute necessity of prayer is put out of all doubt by the plain command of God. No man is left at liberty whether he will pray or no, or allowed to neglect prayer, without suffering any other loss than the want of those supplies he might procure by it. He who does not pray, contracts additional guilt and sets at defiance the ordinance of God; since he has not more expressly required us to show mercy to our fellow-creatures, than to worship himself. We are taught, that "Men ought always to pray, and to continue in prayer." In vain therefore do we plead a strict regard to the substantial duties of temperance, of justice, and of mercy, as an exemption from the obligation of prayer. To do so, is actually to live in the commission of the basest theft, defrauding our God of his due, by refusing to render to him that tribute of prayer which he demands. With equal reason, and with as little affront to him, may we refuse to obey his law in being just to men, as refuse to honor him by real prayer.

This contempt of God, expressed by neglecting prayer for his favor, grace, and Spirit, is a sin, which no excellences that the world applauds, can at all compensate. Like rebellion in the state, wherever it is, it cancels all pretences to any good qualities. As the kings of the earth do not acquit a rebel, though rebellion may be his only crime, much less does the King of kings, whose name is jealous, overlook contumely thrown upon himself, because the person guilty of it abstains from fraud and injustice towards men. To imagine God will overlook such an affront, is to entertain the most frivolous idea of the divine character: it is, with the Epicureans of old, to enthrone God in heaven indeed, but at the same time to regard him as quite indifferent whether he is held in reverence or in contempt on earth. But such a God is no more like the God of the Christians, than Baal or Moloch are. The God of Christians is a God jealous and terrible: jealous, not to allow his honor to be given to another, or denied to himself; terrible, to avenge himself on his adversaries, who withhold that homage which appertains to him as the Lord of the universe, in whom we all live, and move, and have our being. This God hath commanded his servants and messengers, by every form of expression that can engage the attention, to teach men, that to serve him with godly fear and reverence is the one thing needful. By consequence, a despiser and neglecter of prayer, though adorned with all the amiable qualities the world can admire, still wants that which must hallow his generosity, his benevolence, and all that is extolled as virtue. For though social good qualities are idolized by the multitude, they weigh nothing in the balance of the sanctuary, unless they spring from religious affections: "For them that honor me," says the Almighty, "I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. ii. 30. In other words, nothing shall excuse or palliate the guilt of attempting to supersede the necessity of devotional duties, by affecting to magnify moral honesty and social virtues as the sum and substance of man's duty.

## SUNDAY XXXVI.—CHAP. XXXVI.

### THE REQUISITES OF TRUE PRAYER, AND ITS SUCCESS.

We have taken a view of the object, the nature, the matter, and the necessity of prayer: what further relates to this important subject respects the requisites of true prayer, and its infallible success, where they are found.

1. The first requisite in acceptable prayer, is a real intention to observe and do what God commands. For, if, out of regard to worldly interest, or for the sake of some evil gratification, we refuse to submit to his authority, flattering ourselves that multiplied devotions, or obedience in all points except where the darling iniquity interferes, is sufficient; then our prayers, instead of finding acceptance, will be resented as the highest provocation.—For what can be more base than for a man to pretend to honor God by prayer, whilst he is giving the most substantial proof of real contempt of him in his wilful disobedience? What can be more offensive than to pretend to implore pardon when we are determined not yet to give up sin; or to entreat to be set at liberty, as if we were unwillingly enslaved, when we really love our bondage? If we thus regard iniquity in our heart, though we move many prayers, the Lord will not hear us; though we are most passionate in our devotions, he will hide his face from us: "for God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth."

It must however be observed with peculiar cau-

tion in this place, that no one, though in actual subjection to sin, ought on this account to be discouraged from praying, provided he longs for deliverance from it; for at the throne of grace it is that he must receive this blessing. Nor is any one unequalled to make acceptable prayer to God, though during his first seeking his favor the combat with old sins is severe and dubious; and he may be once and again hurried into his former wickedness. In this case, if the sinner finds shame, sorrow, and self-abhorrence, with a desire, notwithstanding the dreadful power of his corruptions, to serve God in truth, he is immediately to make his complaint to him more bitterly, and to bewail his miserable bondage more deeply: and then he will know there is a God, who looketh down from heaven to hear the groanings of such as are in captivity to their sins, and to deliver the souls in their own apprehension appointed unto death.

2. A second requisite in prayer is humility. We must pray under a sense of our guilt and of our depravity, as well as of our weakness and wants.—We must pray with self-abasing sentiments, conscious that we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to God, much less to receive from him pardon, peace, and salvation: we must pray as mere supplicants for mercy, who would have no cause at all to complain of injustice, if our sins were avenged upon us. Great stress is laid in Scripture upon this humiliation in prayer: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psal. xxxiv. 18.—And when the divine Majesty is described with all possible sublimity, this requisite of an acceptable worshipper is specified: "Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. lvii. 15. St. James also very strongly urges the necessity of this humiliation: he addresses himself to those who were formalists in devotion; constant enough in their prayers, but very easy and thoughtless about their guilt. After reproving them therefore for asking amiss, that they might consume it upon their lusts, he directs them to a successful manner of praying: "God," says he, "resisteth the proud; but giveth grace unto the humble. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord," that is, with the lowest prostration and self-abasement confess your guilt and your desert in his sight, "and he shall lift you up." James iv. 9, 10.

3. This sense of our own vileness must accompany our prayer in opposition to Pharisaic self-conceit; and in proof of abiding consciousness that we can never be justified before our God through our own works. But with this humiliation must be joined an affiance in God, and a holy boldness in approaching him. When we ask, we must not fluctuate between hope and despondency, but assure ourselves that we shall be as certainly succored, and as certainly enriched with all that our souls need, as if the power and the blessings we implore were already in our possession. For instance, when we confess our sin with sorrow, shame, and humiliation, begging for mercy through the atonement, we must be fully persuaded that we do obtain mercy. When we pray for the mastery over our natural corruptions, we must assure ourselves they shall be subdued. When in perplexity of mind and in great tribulation, we beg of God support and deliverance, we must not entertain a fear that perhaps he will not hear us. For by giving way to distrust, questionings, and jealousies, whether God will perform the gracious promises which he hath made to the



poor and needy, we greatly dishonor him, and in the very act of solemn address to him as the Almighty, betray a disbelief of his veracity, or power, or love to them that call on his name.

For this cause we are warned in Scripture to take heed, that when we come to God in prayer we resist every doubt that may arise about his relieving our wants. "Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God," that is, depend upon his almighty power for the performance of every thing that he encourages you to expect from him: "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith:" that is, how great soever any difficulty may seem, which you have to overcome, in the way of duty, even though it were as unlikely to be effected as that you should root up a mountain by a word of command, it shall be brought to pass, provided that ye have an humble and unshaken trust in the divine power and promises. Mark xi. 22, 23. And in proof that this confidence in prayer was not to be peculiar to the apostles, but a necessary requisite in all Christians, St. James gives this unchangeable direction to the Christian church; "If any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James i. 5, 6, 7.

From these passages it appears that affiance in God is a principal qualification in acceptable prayer; that we ought to have recourse to God with the same liberty and confidence as to a father, a brother, or a bosom friend. The delightful communion carried on between him and believers is therefore thus emphatically expressed: "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;" that is, the law of worship and submission to the eternal Majesty is softened into a holy familiarity, and converted, through the abundant manifestations of his grace, into a sweet and childlike dependence upon his care and love for us. Rom. viii. 15, 16.

4. It is indeed difficult to conceive how such confidence in God, such assurance of receiving from him whatever we ask for the good of our souls, can consist with a consciousness of our own vileness; or how can we conquer the fear that must arise from a sense of the multitude of our defects, so as not to talk with a faltering tongue. This difficulty is removed by another grand requisite of prayer, without which it can have no success: I mean the offering it up to God in dependence on the sacrifice, righteousness, and intercession of Jesus, as the great High-priest of his church.

By this we acknowledge that our own duties are so far from having any merit to procure for us a favorable regard from God, that we do not even presume to offer to him his due homage without having respect to our accepted surety, the all-perfect Mediator between God and man. By this we confess, that the death of Jesus for our transgressions in vindication of the justice of God, and his appearance in heaven as our Intercessor, are our encouragement to draw nigh to God in full assurance of faith, notwithstanding the absolute purity of his nature, and the tokens of his indignation against sin.

And when Jesus is this our hope, and his atoning blood and righteousness all our confidence, we can see that there is no room for confusion or distrust,

notwithstanding our own vileness. He is ordained of God for this very purpose to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Both by office and by love he stands engaged to mediate in favor of all who come to God by him, and to accomplish all their just and lawful desires. The command from heaven therefore is express that we should, in consideration of his character and office, "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need." Heb. iv. 16.

The success of true prayer is most certain from considering the source of it in the heart of fallen man. We are taught in Scripture that we are not sufficient to think a good thought of ourselves; it follows therefore, that no one can feel a real intention to glorify God by uniform obedience, or a holy shame and sorrow for sin; no one can come to God as a child in want to his heavenly Father, or trust in the Lord Jesus Christ without an actual gift of grace, without a divine influence, and drawing from the Father. Now can it be supposed that this gift is bestowed in vain? Can it be thought that any one will be so much enlightened from above, as to desire to be kept from every wilful offence, to know, and to live in obedience to the gospel, and that he will be stirred up in prayer to make request unto God, that he may have power to do so, and yet not be heard? Can such a supplicant fall down on his knees before God, only to rise up covered with confusion at the rejection of his suit? No, by no means. God, gracious and merciful, is not wont thus to grieve the contrite spirit, or to disappoint the holy expectations excited in the heart by his own divine agency. On the contrary, a real desire of receiving spiritual mercy, is a pledge of obtaining it: for since "every good and every perfect gift," in every degree of it, "cometh from above, from the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, who of his own will begat us by the word of his truth;" we must assuredly conclude, that if he hath inclined our hearts to seek him, he will be found of us. James i. 17, 18.

This most comfortable truth is positively established, by many declarations of God's delight to hear and answer all that call upon him. Thus in one place he describes himself as looking into the inmost recesses of the heart, waiting to see the first dawning of prayer, and to answer it before it has put on the direct form of petition: "And it shall come to pass before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isa. lxv. 24. In another, he commands one of his prophets to publish the immediate acceptance of his own petition, the moment he steadfastly proposed to offer it unto him; "I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Psal. xxxii. 5. And that we might harbor no suspicion of the success of prayer, our Redeemer compares the readiness of God to succor the poor and needy, who call upon him, to that which parents feel with regard to their offspring: "What man is there," says he, "of you, whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil" (corrupt and vitiated in your nature) are still by the force of instinct drawn gladly to supply the necessities of your children, "how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?"

If it should be objected, that the undutifulness which the very best men too often manifest towards their heavenly Father, and their violations of his law in time past, may well justify doubts whether God can hear them consistently with the honor of his perfections; this perplexity is removed by the assurance that Jesus appears, with his own blood

in the presence of God, as an Intercessor for all who call upon him in his name. He appears as an advocate in the behalf of the guilty, alleging what satisfies the law, and absolves the humbled delinquent. The memorial of his abundant kindness in dying on the cross, is perpetually represented in the presence of God; and the Mediator declares it to be his no less earnest than just request, that, for his sake, the penitent acknowledgments of those who believe on him, and their prayers, should be accepted; their sins blotted out, and increase of grace bestowed upon them: "for he ever liveth to make intercession."

To strengthen our assurance of the success of prayer, nothing further can possibly be added than the confirmation of fact and experience. If all who have made their prayer to God in the way he has himself appointed, and for the blessings he has promised, have ever received the things they asked from him, then there cannot be a more complete demonstration of any truth, than of the infallible success of prayer. Now the word of God abounds with proofs of the Almighty's pleasure to make his power as it were tributary to the prayer of his faithful people. Thus the prayer of Joshua stopped the sun in his course, and that of Elijah, though a man of like passions with ourselves, opened and shut the springs which water the earth. The prayer of the three children preserved them from being hurt in the fiery furnace, and that of Daniel saved him from the devouring lions. The time indeed would fail to mention what we find recorded in Scripture of the wonders wrought through the power of prayer. Now if, in extraordinary cases, for the vindication of God's truth and manifestation of his glory, the effect of prayer was thus miraculous, how much more may we conclude it to be effectual, when it only seeks deliverance from sin, and the gift of those graces by which God may be glorified on earth?

There is indeed no age without a cloud of weaknesses of the infallible efficacy of prayer. Ask those distinguished persons in our generation, who really conform to the Christian rule, and copy the example of their Lord, what has given them such mastery over their passions, such sweet complacency and good-will towards all men, such a readiness to be directed and governed by the word of God through unfeigned love to him and delight in his service, and they will unanimously declare that not by their own power, wisdom, or resolution; not through any original better formation of their tempers, or the advantage of education, but through the grace of God obtained by prayer, they are what they are. They began in earnest, they persevered with importunity in calling upon the Lord, and according to his promise he heard them: they made their application to him; and were not disappointed.

On the contrary, there is not a slave to sin within the pale of the Christian church; not one defiled by the lust of uncleanness or the love of money; not one tyrannized over by angry, peevish, or turbulent dispositions, but he is condemned in his own conscience either as an utter despiser of prayer, or as a mere formal trifler in it: such a one, therefore, experiences no deliverance from the power of evil tempers, nor gains the least ground against them.

Real Christians therefore must value prayer, and be constant and unwearied in it: so will the same bountiful God, whose ears are ever open to the prayers of his faithful people, open in the end heaven to receive their persons. He will give them an abundant entrance into that kingdom, where petitions will be no more; because neither weakness nor want, fear nor trial, will remain, but every feeling of the soul be perfect felicity, and every expression of it perfect praise.

## SUNDAY XXXVII.—CHAP. XXXVII.

## STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURE.

HAVING considered the nature of prayer as a principal exercise of devotion, I now proceed to state another duty equally important, equally binding upon Christians, and equally necessary to maintain a holy life—the study of the holy Scripture.

As the Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and its great design is to instruct men in the knowledge of him, so it contains repeated commands to search into and meditate upon its sacred contents. "These words," says God, "which I command thee, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." Deut. vi. 8, 9, that is, thou shalt most familiarly discourse with them, and most carefully treasure them up in thy mind. St. Paul, speaking of the Old Testament, tells us, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning and for our admonition." Of the New Testament we are told, that it was written "that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son God; and that believing we might have life through his name." John xx. 31. St. Peter instructs us, that he wrote both his Epistles to stir up the pure minds of Christians by way of remembrance, and to put them in mind "of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. Now as these are the ends for which the Scriptures were inspired of God, and directed to us, so do they lay an obligation upon all into whose hands they are put to acquaint themselves with them. And not to read what God has written and directed to us, is in fact a profane contempt both of his authority and mercy; it looks as if we thought him such an insignificant Being, or ourselves so little to need his information, that it is not worth our while to peruse with care and frequency the contents of those sacred books, which by his inspired penmen he hath vouchsafed to send us.

Indeed, the will of God is so plainly revealed in this matter, that no one but an infidel will justify a total neglect of the Bible. Many, however, who profess to believe in it, read it so carelessly, or so seldom, as to derive little advantage from it. Allowance no doubt must be made for different capacities and different situations in life: yet after this allowance too many will still be found guilty of trifling with the word of God. The principal thing which men of all stations should avoid is, a formal, careless way of reading. This has been, in all ages, a general fault, and a great one indeed: for we may read the Scripture in this way every day of our lives, and be in no degree wiser or better. To derive spiritual benefit therefore from the Bible, the following rules must necessarily be observed.

1. Whenever we open the sacred book of God, we should lift up our hearts to him to teach us the true meaning of what we are going to read. This is necessary, because those doctrines, which are its very glory, offend our natural pride, and its precepts contradict our dearest lusts. To receive the one therefore with humility and thankfulness, and to submit to be governed by the other, requires assistance from heaven, and a blessing from the Father and Fountain of light. Accordingly, in the Bible we are frequently taught that we cannot know the excellency of his doctrines, nor rely on them with such a persuasion as to honor God by it, unless he opens our understandings; for "no man," saith St. Paul, "can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And when the apostle speaks of



those believers in Christ who knew the things which were freely given of God to them, he declares they received "the spirit which is of God, that they might know them." So deeply sensible were the holy men of old, of their own natural incapacity of reaping any profitable knowledge from the Scripture, without the teachings of God obtained by prayer, that with the Bible open before them they continually made request for illumination of their minds to understand it aright. "I am a stranger upon earth, O hide not thy commandments from me: I am thy servant, give me understanding that I may know thy statutes. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things in thy law." These blessed servants of God we must imitate, and depend on the Spirit for light and instruction when we read God's word. Not indeed expecting a new light, that is, any new doctrine, either distinct from the Scripture rule, or supplemental to it; nor laying aside our reason and understanding, relying upon an immediate inspiration to interpret Scripture.—Either of these things is weak enthusiasm. But with the greatest sobriety we may expect, and ought to pray for the Spirit's help to give us real advantage and improvement whilst we are reading the word of God. Because the Spirit is promised to abide with the church for ever, as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the things of God: nor shall we ever know them so as to feel their power and authority on the heart, without internal illumination.

There is, I readily grant, a knowledge of Scripture truths, which men of parts and penetration attain at once, upon turning their attention to them; so that they can talk and preach about them without detection amongst the multitude, whilst they are workers of iniquity, blind and dead in their sins.—But then this knowledge is speculative, worthless, resting in the head, and never changing the heart. And so must all knowledge of divine things be, unless the influence of the Spirit of God gives it power to command and sway the soul. Because whatever way we come to be certain of any thing contrary to the bent of our own wicked hearts, we need much more than the brightest possible external evidence of the truth of the thing, to make it efficacious to determine our will against its own strong and corrupt propensity. If you demand a proof of this, consider the remarkable case of the people of the Jews at mount Horeb. Could any one of them doubt that the authority, which avouched the law given to them, was decisive? Nevertheless, how daringly did they rush into idolatry! They did it not only against the express letter of the law, but whilst the terrible voice, in which it was delivered, one would think, was still sounding in their ears.—And though they could not doubt the authority of God, yet their rebellions are imputed to their infidelity. "How long," saith the Lord God, "will this people provoke me? how long will it be ere they believe me?" Num. xiv. 14. The very same is the case with ourselves. We turn aside from the known commandments of our God; we prefer the service of some vile lust to our bounden duty, though we allow the Scripture to be a divine revelation, and read it as such, till we read it with prayer, imploring the God whose word it is, to grant, by the illumination of his Spirit, that his word may be put into our mind, and exert a sovereign sway over it.

2. A second rule, no less worthy of our constant and careful observation, is to read but a small portion at one time. It is common for those who have the character of being very devout, to set themselves a certain quantity, suppose two or three chapters, to read every day; a much larger portion than they can sufficiently attend to, except it be in some of the historical parts of the Bible. Hence, though

they converse much in this manner with the word of God, they remain as ignorant of its contents, at least as much unrenewed in their minds, as those who never look into it. We must by no means therefore content ourselves with having the words and expressions of God before our eyes, or in our mouths. On the contrary, we must pause and deliberate much on the things signified by the words; we must labor to fix the true import of the divine expressions deep in our minds! so that the very spirit of the Bible may be, as it were, transcribed into them.

It is true, in this method we shall read but a little, and our progress in going through all the principal parts of the sacred volume will be slow, compared with those who can read many chapters in a day. But then the singular benefit of such a method will amply reward our pains, and prove its preference; for whilst in much recollection and silent meditation we take the word of God into our hands, and place ourselves as it were before him for instruction, we shall find the meaning of it beautifully unfolding; and the knowledge of what we gain in this manner will come with a transforming efficacy. It will also remain with us, and be our own for use and recollection at all times; whilst the comments and explanations of other men, and our own hasty readings, however they may seem to instruct us, are soon forgotten, because they have no root in us.—Notwithstanding therefore that we may be strongly opposed in this method of reading the word of God by our sloth and natural aversion deeply to attend to spiritual things, we must do violence to ourselves; a little perseverance will master all the difficulty, and a little perseverance will enable each of us to say, "The law of the Lord is more precious to me than thousands of gold and silver; in that law do I exercise myself day and night."

3. Nearly allied to this careful meditation on the word of God is another important rule, which we must observe when we read any principal part of it; that is, to exact of ourselves correspondent affections, and if we do not experience them, to lament and bewail the poverty and misery of our condition. For instance, when the character of God is before us; when we are reading such passages as describe him infinite in power, glorious in holiness, continually adored by the host of heaven, yet more tender and affectionate than a parent to the faithful in Christ Jesus, and interesting himself in all the most minute circumstances that can affect the welfare of those that love him: to read such descriptions of God will be to very little purpose, unless we pause and ask ourselves, Whether we in this manner really behold the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God! whether we have such views of him who is thus represented, as to make him indeed our delight; as to satisfy us of his good and gracious intentions towards ourselves in particular, and to lead us with comfort to rely on him for all we want? In like manner, when we read the Scripture representations of the glory, the offices, and the sufferings of the Redeemer, with the inestimable promises he makes to them who trust in his name, little will it profit us unless we also at the same time search and try our souls, whether these representations make us eager to embrace a Saviour thus altogether lovely,—unfeignedly thankful to God for this unspeakable gift?—and able, without doubt or wavering, to yield ourselves up to his service, and to trust him as the guardian of our eternal interests! Also, when we meet with Scripture assertions of the weakness, blindness, guilt, and depravity of fallen man, in vain shall we assent to them, because found in the book of God, if we do not trace each of these branches of natural corruption as they have discovered themselves in our behavior and behol-

some remains of them still in ourselves. When the self-denying tempers of the faithful in Christ, their deliverance from the dominion of worldly hopes and fears, their unfeigned love to God and man, and their real imitation of Jesus in the abhorrence of all evil, is the subject before us, in vain shall we read of these spiritual attainments, unless we examine in what degree the infinitely desirable transformation has taken place in our own hearts.

4. Lastly, We must read those portions of Scripture most frequently, which relate to subjects of the greatest moment. For as, in the frame of our body, God has ordained some parts to be absolutely necessary to its life, others to its comfort and ease, and others again to its ornament; in the same manner is the Scripture composed. As our greatest regard therefore is to such parts of the body as are most vital, so our most frequent contemplation must be fixed on those parts of Scripture which most nearly concern the glory of God, our own eternal salvation, and the good of others. The Scriptures therefore which delineate the perfections of God, his jealous regard for his own honor, the necessity of living in willing subjection to his authority, the certain insupportable miseries of the unconverted and unbelieving, the earthly and the sensual, call for our frequent perusal; for in such a world as this, and with hearts disposed as ours are, in vain we attempt to observe the commands of God, if we are not immoveably persuaded of these truths, and constantly reminded of them. The Scriptures also which describe the miseries of our fallen state, the evil bias that is upon our will, our utter impotence on this very account to recover ourselves, are in a very eminent degree deserving of our frequent meditation. Of the same important nature are all those passages in holy writ which declare what the Saviour is in his own personal excellency; what he has done and suffered on earth; what he is now doing in heaven for his church: which acquaints us with his gracious calls and his tender exhortations; which instruct us in the knowledge of our own indispensable need of him in his offices of prophet, priest, and king. No one can look into the Bible, without perceiving with what peculiar emphasis these subjects are treated; how they project to our view, and are insisted upon and extolled as the glorious display of God's wisdom and love. A deep intimate acquaintance therefore with these things is a principal end for which Scripture was given, and, therefore, should be our object in perusing it.

## SUNDAY XXXVIII.—CHAP. XXXVIII.

### THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIAN HAPPINESS.

It is too general an opinion, that men cannot be so happy in the present world by submitting in all things to the rules of the Christian faith, as by allowing themselves more liberty than it permits; that if we are to be entirely subject to the law of God, we must give up every present gratification, and, like the superstitious recluses of the convent, pass our time in melancholy, or at least under very irksome restraints. A falsehood this, which is at once full of impiety and mischief. Full of impiety; for it represents a life of faith and obedience to God as irksome, and only to be endured in view of some reward, or through fear of some evil in another world; when, in point of gratification, it has the promise of this world, as well as of that which is to come. The slander also is big with mischief; because if men imagine Christian obedience an uncomfortable service, their violent propensity to immediate pleasure, joined with their faint belief of eternal things, will certainly lead them to choose a

part in the voluptuousness at hand, risking any loss they may sustain beyond the grave, as it is distant and invisible.

The system therefore of doctrinal and practical Christianity contained in this volume, cannot more properly be concluded than with a representation of several sources of happiness peculiar to the faithful in Christ Jesus; and with some unanswerable proofs of the reasonableness, certainty, and necessity of those evangelical consolations. From whence the conclusion will be evident, that there are no pleasures upon earth worthy to be named with those enjoyed by the obedient children of God though they are often pitied as miserable and melancholy persons on account of the strictness of their religion.

1. The first source then of happiness peculiar to the faithful in Christ Jesus, is the excellent knowledge they have attained. God the Father in all his adorable perfections, in the works he has made, and in the word he has caused to be written, in the redemption he has provided, and in the blessings has promised: God the Son in his original glory and marvellous humiliation, in all the parts and most benevolent purposes of his mediation: God the Holy Ghost in all his influences, gifts, and graces, with the realities of the invisible, eternal world, constitute the pleasing subjects of meditation to the true believer. Nominal Christians, it is true, hear of all these subjects, perhaps profess constantly to believe in them; but they can neither find time to take any exact survey of them, nor to ponder them in their hearts: therefore "seeing they see, and do not perceive, and hearing they hear, and do not understand." The knowledge of the things of God, on the contrary, which real believers possess, is lively, penetrating, and of course delightful.

No one can question the pleasures of the understanding, while thousands toil for no other reward. In the eyes of all the votaries of science, the discovery of truth has the most bewitching charms; even though the truth only relates to something in this perishing world, and is without any power to produce the dispositions essential to peace of mind. Is such knowledge pleasant? How much more, then, the discovery of truths, which, besides their novelty, have a grandeur capable of engaging the whole mind, and filling it with admiration! This grandeur is no sooner apprehended than the truths of God necessarily become a source of delight. Before, they were either despised or suspected, or blindly assented to, from the force of education;—now, they act like themselves; they inspire new resolutions, they kindle ardent desires, they excite abundant hope: in a word, by their spiritual knowledge believers are brought into a new and glorious world, where objects interesting beyond measure, and tending to their honor and exaltation, surround them.

This pleasure, which true believers enjoy from their first acquaintance with divine truths, increase as they advance. There is a very sensible progress in divine, no less than in human science: first a faint or confused view of the truths of God, then a clear perception of their matchless excellence, and various usefulness: first a dependence upon them, mixed with hesitation and fear, afterwards a full assurance of understanding and hope, a comprehending the breadth and length, and height and depth, of what before was very superficially known. Such a progress is inseparable from perseverance in the faith of Christ, and a diligent use of the word of God and of prayer, and it never fails to prove a spring of fresh and increasing delight.

2. But this knowledge of the truth is always connected with the possession of the richest spiritual blessings; particularly the peace of God.



No sooner are believers brought to the knowledge of Christ so as to depend upon his work and mediation, than they are assured by the promise and the oath of God, that there is no condemnation to them that are in him, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. To this truth, the prophets, the apostles, and the Redeemer, continually bear witness. In the same proportion therefore as they receive it, their conscience is justly quieted, and from a sharp accuser is turned into an encouraging friend. It now no longer upbraids them with their folly, but commends their wisdom in flying to the stronghold which God hath provided; no longer haunts them with apprehensions of approaching punishment, but registers and attests their cordial acceptance of the Lord, who is mighty to save; they have now "the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." In this supernatural fact they can perceive that the indictment which was against them for their transgressions of the law, is taken out of the way, and "they have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus."

3. Another blessing accompanying the knowledge of Christ is the privilege of adoption into the family of God. To give some just idea of the delight arising from this peculiar privilege of believers, it is necessary to explain the nature of adoption, as the practice of it anciently obtained. It was customary, especially in the Grecian and Roman states, for a man of wealth, in default of issue from his own body, to make choice of some person upon whom he put his name, requiring him to relinquish his own family, and dwell from that time in his, and proclaiming him publicly his heir. In this act there was an imitation of nature, and the afflictive failure of offspring from himself, was supplied by something as really compensating for his loss as possible. The person thus adopted, was by law entitled to the inheritance, upon the decease of his adopter, and, however before void of all claim to such a benefit, or of expectation of it, was invested with the same privileges as if he had been born heir to his benefactor. Suppose then this act of adoption taking place in favor of some desolate orphan, how conspicuous would be his exaltation! how delightful the change of his condition! how happy, in the judgment of the world, the object of such a prosperous providence!

But worse than that of the most destitute orphan is our natural state. Our great Redeemer teaches us that we are "wretched, and miserable, poor, and blind, and naked," till our relation to him by a living faith enriches us with all spiritual blessings. Though the truth of this representation should be disallowed by the world, yet all believers in Christ Jesus acknowledge it to be a faithful picture of their own case. In this condition it was, they heard, and understood, and believed, that the most merciful God "sent his own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons;" that thus, through faith in his name, they might become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; "for to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Have not these persons then, who attain to this heavenly gift, a source of delight above all others in the world? Have they not the utmost cause to cry out in joyful admiration, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! what an height of honor! what an acquisition of true riches! for sinners to be adopted by the Lord God Almighty into a relation with himself, which at once entitles them to all things. For "all things," says God,

speaking by his apostle to true believers, "are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," that is, all means, ordinances, or ministers; "or the world," all the creatures and things in it, as far as they can be of any real service; "or life," as long as its continuance can redound to your good; "or death," which will be your everlasting gain; in a word, "things present, and things to come;" that is, all temporal and eternal mercies, "are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

4. Inseparably joined with the knowledge and privileges already mentioned, there is another source of peculiar delight to real believers, namely, the exercise of gracious tempers, wrought in them by the Holy Ghost.

In their repentance (how discouraging an aspect soever repentance may wear in the eyes of the world) pleasure still mingles with their tears; because they are tears which flow from a just and sacred principle within. They love to abase themselves before God, to give his holiness, justice, and majesty their due honor; they are happy whilst they feel deep relatings for their past ill conduct towards Him, who does not stand over them with a rod of iron, to execute vengeance on them as they deserve, but holds forth the sceptre of his grace, that they may approach him and live. There is an inconceivable delight felt when the believer, returning to God, can say, "Lo! I come to thee: thou art the Lord whom I will serve: what I so long, by the basest sacrilege, alienated from thy blessed service, presence, and communion, I now desire to bring back to thee. Take all the powers of my soul and body; possess and employ them only in thy work and to thy glory. When believers in this manner disclaim their own base interests unreservedly, without intending to keep any thing from God; absolutely, without making any conditions of their own, accepting his with all thankfulness; peremptorily, without halting between two opinions, as if they were inclined to retract the surrender of themselves which they have made; there is much delight interwoven in these exercises of repentance towards God.

But still much more in acts of faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ; for in these, there is a lively acknowledgment and habitual consideration of the highest benefits, of the strongest motives to love and obedience, as well as the strongest ground of joy and triumph. What can you imagine more delightful than for men, who see themselves all sin and misery, to look unto Jesus, who says, "he will deliver the poor and needy when they cry unto him, and them that have no helper?" Their own emptiness they feel, and know his fulness for their relief; they bow at his footstool ready to perish, and he receives them as the father the returning prodigal, to put upon them the best robe; they confess their desert of nothing but wrath, and he freely grants them pardon; they know that without his interposition they must have sunk into hell, but behold he has exalted them into children of God, and heirs of glory. What pleasing emotions must such views of themselves and of him excite in their minds!

With these permanent sources of peculiar delight, all real believers are in some measure acquainted. Hence they stand independent of the world for their best joys, and can be happy in spite of all disappointments from it.

Judge no longer then after the flesh concerning the source of true happiness; for it is no more perceptible by sense than the excellences of the mind, than learning or genius. And as you would justly meet with contempt from the world for your ignorance and stupidity, should you dare to say that there is no delight in studying the fine arts, or in making discoveries in nature by philosophical per-

netration; because these things are not adapted to the taste, or within the comprehension of the vulgar; because they are neither showy nor palpable, like the pleasures of the sensualist: so you may equally betray your own miserable ignorance in the sight of all the excellent of the earth, when you dare to deny the present delight enjoyed by those who believe to the saving of their souls.

Pray therefore for a divine knowledge to correct your depraved apprehensions, and to remove your grossness and unbelief of heart. Then you will perceive that Christians are not more distinguished by purity of practice, than by their superior pleasures: then you will understand (contrary to the low thoughts entertained of the Christian's choice, contrary to the impious prejudices abounding every where against it,) that among all the objects of sense never did the eye see any thing so grand and beautiful, or the ear hear any thing so delightful and advantageous; amongst all the branches of science, never did the thoughts of man comprehend any thing so completely adapted to bless the whole soul, "as the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, even before the sons of men;" which things are given to them on this side the grave, as a pledge of what they shall possess in the perfection of glory to all eternity.

#### SUNDAY XXXIX.—CHAP. XXXIX.

##### THE REASONABLENESS OF EXPECTING CHRISTIAN JOY.

THERE is nothing perhaps, at first view more unaccountable than the strong prejudices which are entertained against the peculiar delights which spring from the knowledge of Christ. That the doctrines of the gospel should offend, is no wonder; for the haughty spirit of man cannot brook the self-abasement they require. That its precepts should be complained of, it is easy to suppose, from the self-denial they enjoin. But that men, who call themselves Christians, should quarrel even with the joys of their own religion; that they should condemn them as at variance with solid reason and sound judgment, is indeed a most surprising fact: since, upon the bare report of such sources of joy, our natural desire of happiness, one would conclude, must strongly prompt us to wish them real; and frequent disappointments from the world must incline us to think it also reasonable, that there should be some friendly sanctuary appointed for man, in which true joy and peace might be found.

But upon closer inquiry, we shall discover the ground of these violent prejudices against the joys of the Christian faith. If these joys were allowed to be real, then those who have no experience of them must by their own confession discover, that they themselves are destitute of true Christianity; they must be compelled to own how low the state of their own religion is, which consists in assenting to Scripture truths without feeling their power; in a round of duties without spiritual life; in being honest, sober, and harmless, without any more delight in God than professed infidels experience.—The character, peace, and security therefore of all nominal Christians are at stake, and they are concerned for their own sakes, to cry down that joy as enthusiastic, to which they are themselves strangers. Add to this, that "the spirit that lusteth in us to envy," cannot allow others to receive tokens of the favorable loving-kindness of God, of which we do not partake ourselves.

From these causes, enforced perhaps by a few instances of real delusion, we may fairly account for the general prejudice against one of the noblest privileges of a Christian, delight and joy in God.

In vindication therefore of this privilege, I shall prove, that it is reasonable to conclude that real Christians may experience from the sources of joy already mentioned, peculiar happiness, and that it is certain they in fact do.

1. First then, It is most reasonable to conclude, that real Christians may experience peculiar happiness, because the infinitely glorious God always proposes himself, in his own blessed word, to our conceptions under the character of a Father to the faithful in Christ, in a sense to which none besides themselves can lay claim. It would be endless to cite all the passages which assert this important distinction. The Redeemer, in the plainest manner possible, distinguishes all believers, to the end of time, from the rest of mankind: "For whosoever," says he, "shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven," that is, in a believing reverential regard to me, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And when he was going into heaven, he said unto the representatives of the whole body of believers, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." The apostle makes the very same distinction, and exhorts those who were wavering, whether they should separate and come out from the world or not, to shun all conformity to the ungodly, from this very motive, that then God would receive them, and be a Father unto them, and they should be his sons and daughters. 2. Cor. vi. 17, 18.

As the great God then stands in this relation of a Father, peculiarly to the faithful, we may assuredly conclude from thence, notwithstanding the distance between him and us, that his affection towards these his children far surpasses the love of earthly parents towards their own offspring. But where is the parent worthy of that tender name, who does not manifest his delight in all his dutiful children—who does not make their state of subjection a pleasure to them by numerous tokens of parental love? Is it not reasonable then to conclude that the eternal Father may make as sensible a difference between believers and hypocrites, as we do between our duteous children, who deserve and want encouragement from us, and stubborn ones who must be kept under a frown?—that he should manifest himself to the one as he doth not to the other?—that, to use his own words, "his secret should be with them that fear him, and that he should show them his covenant," whilst others remain in a state of distance from him?—whilst utter strangers to spiritual light, they are left to grovel in the pleasures of sin, and the things of time, which they are base enough to prefer to God, and to the riches of his grace? Certainly this is a most rational conclusion, especially when it is considered that believers are declared through the whole Bible to be the delight and the treasure of God.

2. Further; The reasonableness of supposing believers may experience peculiar delight, will appear more evident from considering in what manner a tender father behaves to his children, who from their relation to him are exposed to the persecution of his foes. Here all the fire of parental love blazes out; here it is the parent's highest gratification to caress his suffering children with all possible demonstrations of his delight in them. If we, then, to use our Lord's inference, being evil, know how in such cases to reward, by an overflowing of affection, our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father in some better manner give tokens of his delight in them, who are sufferers through zeal to his truth and love to his name? But who can be a Christian, according to the Scripture definition of that character, and not suffer for it, whilst the world lieth in wickedness? Who can abstain from all epidemical profaneness and carelessness,



without meeting immediately with much to exercise his patience, to try his courage, and to prove his Christian fidelity? What young person, especially (and a very great part of the servants of God devote themselves to him in the days of their youth,) what young person, I say, shall dare to be more religious than those about him, without feeling a persecution, which, though domestic and little observed, is very grievous to flesh and blood to bear? In such cases does not sound reason justify the Scripture assertion, and teach us to conclude, that God will afford some immediate counterbalance to what is inflicted upon these confessors for his name and truth?—that he will enlighten the eyes of their understanding to know what is the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards them that believe, to save and defend them?

3. Again; It is highly reasonable to conclude that real Christians may enjoy peculiar happiness in this life, because shortly their eternal state will be so immensely different from that of the careless and ungodly. The latter, alas! hardened even unto death, then meet with a full reward for their deeds in the frown of an angry God, and in the feelings of a conscience that can know no rest. The former are no sooner absent from the body, than we are assured they shall be present with the Lord.

I would ask then, is it not most reasonable to suppose that some kind of anticipation of this bliss is enjoyed, before the fulness of it is revealed to their transported souls; that those blessed heirs of salvation, who are soon to inherit the promises should have a delightful acquaintance with their meaning and appropriation beforehand, and some degree of joy in their God, the same in kind with what is reserved for them in heaven?—that those, whom the King of kings will confess before men and angels, and reward with everlasting honors, should in their own consciences rejoice in the hope of glory, and, as the Scripture affirms, should be sealed of God, and have the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts? Is not this much more reasonable than the supposition, that those who are very soon to be as widely distant from each other as heaven from hell, should be at present alike destitute of any sensible enjoyments of the divine favor?—that both should be left to go on till the day of death and final separation; the one no more than the other experiencing the comfort of God's Spirit, the light of his countenance, and the joy of his salvation? Certainly there can be no greater absurdity than to imagine this.

What has been offered may, we hope, suffice to prove that it is not in the least degree enthusiastic to conclude that the faithful in Christ Jesus may have peculiar gratifications of their own; and it may convince us that the experience of these delights too often exploded as delusive, will appear upon closer examination to be perfectly rational.

## SUNDAY XL.—CHAP. XL.

### THE CERTAINTY OF CHRISTIAN JOY.

It is of so much importance to give a just impression of the happiness of the service of our Redeemer, that we have been very full in explaining the sources from which it arises, and the reasonableness of expecting it; but however reasonable it may be that Christians should expect it, still it will be inquired,

whether, in point of fact, they do enjoy it. This inquiry I shall now answer.

And here let me first refer you to the example of primitive Christians. Immediately after that great conversion on the day of Pentecost, their behavior is described in several particulars, and their state of mind, which indeed showed itself in their actions, is sufficiently signified by two words, gladness or exaltation and singleness of heart. In the same book of the Acts, after Philip's preaching in the city of Samaria is mentioned, it is remarked, "there was great joy in that city." When the jailor who had St. Paul in custody had heard him once speak the word of the Lord, besides his actions, which plainly implied great alacrity of heart, it is expressly added in the close, "that he rejoiced." The same account is given of the Ethiopian eunuch. As soon as Philip had preached Jesus unto him, he was baptized; and though his heavenly-appointed guide was snatched from him, yet the doctrine taking place in his heart, "he went on his way," it is not said reasoning, or deeply meditating only, but "rejoicing." Indeed we have reason to think that all who heard the gospel to any good purpose, heard it with the same sentiments of joy. They behaved at first like persons quite amazed and surprised with the grace of God. Before habit or improvement could have had time as yet to manifest themselves, they were raised by the pure joy of the gospel above this world, and ready in its defence to embrace the martyr's stake.

But besides the united testimony of prophets, apostles, and the Saviour himself, in proof that real believers in his name do actually enjoy peculiar delight in his service, there is the evidence of daily fact.—For how can we otherwise account for the total alteration both of choice and conduct in some persons of all ranks, and of all ages, and of all tempers, as soon as they really behold the glory of the gospel? All these are unanimous in avowing they never knew what true happiness meant before they believed. Whatever they found formerly from the pleasures of sin, they confess to be now rendered despicable by their spiritual joy. Hence, long after the terrors of the Lord have ceased to work upon their fears, they keep at a distance from sin and vanity, from persons, things, and amusements on which they once doted, in order to enjoy more of what now makes them happy. Nor can this be owing to notions put into their heads, or to the force of imagination working up fantastic joy; because great numbers have had no idea that there was any such thing as delight in God, till it sprung in their own hearts, at once the object of their surprise, and the cause of their preference of the service of the Lord to all other things. Add to this, that many, who notwithstanding their meek and prudent carriage, are obnoxious to their relations for their godliness, and treated with hardship on that account, are still far from desiring to make their peace at the expense of becoming gay, foolish, and careless, as they once were. They can find a sweetness in secret prayer, reading and meditation, which even under these disadvantageous circumstances is better to them than all their former idle mirth and vain laughter, with the friendship and good countenance of the family to reward it.

These evidences in proof of the reasonableness and certainty of the joy of believers are sufficient to satisfy all, I trust, who will submit to the authority of Scripture, and to deductions clearly drawn from it. I shall add therefore nothing more, but only caution against the wrong use of this doctrine, and exhort all persons, as they love their own happiness, to seek in the first place, the enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel.

TRAVELS

ON THE

CONTINENT OF EUROPE;

THROUGH PARTS OF

THE NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND, NORTHERN  
ITALY, AND FRANCE,

IN THE SUMMER OF 1823.

BY DANIEL WILSON,

BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

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FROM THE FOURTH LONDON EDITION.





## PREFACE.

THE author, ventures to hope that no objections will be raised against the importance which he attaches to the principles of religion in themselves, or against the frequency and warmth with which he commends them on various occasions to others. To make such objections is quite another thing from condemning the harshness of a transition, or arraigning a fault in matters of taste. We need only refer to the constant tenor of the Holy Scriptures, and the deliberate judgment of the best Christians in all ages, in order to show that religion should fill and possess the whole heart. Surely if any thing distinguishes a merely cold accuracy of sentiment from spiritual and vital Christianity, it is this very point. It is easy to admit the truth of every doctrine of Scripture, and yet follow the world, give our affections to the things of time, be supremely desirous of the applause of our fellow-creatures, and shun reproach for the name and doctrine of Christ. A religion which seldom appears but on public and fixed occasions, and which mixes but little with the habitual actions of the life, is far from resembling that holy, animating principle which the Scriptures are designed to implant, and of which they furnish such splendid examples.

A mind penetrated with the astonishing truths of revelation, and grateful for the inestimable blessings of pardon and grace, cannot be indifferent. Lukewarmness in such a case is treachery. The world asks nothing more of us than to be tame and heartless in our religion. Gratitude and love to God, if genuine, must and will appear in their natural fruits. Nor can even a sincere regard to our fellow-creatures consist with the silence on the things of eternity and the soul, which is now so much extolled as a dictate of prudence. The heart which is at all moulded to devotion, cannot but be recalled to its great object by the diversified scenes which arise around it. And the new situations and circumstances of a foreign tour will necessarily excite, in an unusual degree some of these better feelings of piety and thankfulness.

The author is deeply convinced, that our danger in the present day, is not that of regarding God too much, in our travels and our various other concerns, but too little. If we are to "love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength," the first and spontaneous associations of our ideas will connect us with Him; and our most familiar trains of thought will involuntarily lead us to something relating to his providence, his commands, his mercy, his wrath, his holiness, his glory. That is, the governing affection will in this, as in every other case, draw after it all the rest. The conversation with individuals, whether at home or abroad, will accordingly assume the same tone; and the free and unpremeditated Letters written under the influence of such a principle, will, and must, and ought, to partake of a like character.

All this is so indisputable in the view of every thoughtful Christian, that the author is almost ashamed to dwell on such a point. He is persuaded, that no one admitting the truth of revelation, would have ever objected to religion's occupying all our best time and thoughts, if there were not in the minds of men that secret alienation from the love of God, which the Scriptures lay down as a primary fact in the history of our fallen nature, and which is the source of so many other fatal inconsistencies.

It is very possible, indeed, to err by submitting to the public eye hasty effusions in which religious topics are introduced injudiciously and feebly; and the author is far from saying that he may not have been guilty of this fault in the present publication. But without including his own small work in the vindication, he would beg leave to say, that mistakes in judgment of this nature ought not to be too severely visited. Men make similar mistakes on all other subjects, without incurring contempt. Each one speaks and writes according to his measure of natural talents, and acquired faculties and powers. Piety does not confer these adventitious endowments, nor exempt from the ordinary consequences of defects in them. The paramount duty of connecting the great Author of our being with the perpetual blessings of his bounty, is not to be lightly sacrificed to inferior and doubtful questions. The heart which overflows with love to God and man, though it may incur some reproach for minor errors, is infinitely more pleasing to God, than a judgment, however refined, if employed to disguise irreligious principles.

But the author has insensibly advanced towards a grave and important question, and he almost shrinks from the consideration which it seems to demand. The truth is, that his small work has excited anew those objections against what is termed in reproach, Evangelical Religion, which have in all ages followed the sincere profession of the Gospel. Such objections rest on the fundamental distinction between vital Christianity and the mere external forms of it. They have been answered a thousand times—they answer themselves, when the mind is once duly in earnest in the humble study of the Bible. As, however, the author has proceeded so far, he will go on to offer some suggestions on the great topic which he is quite aware is virtually involved in what he has been stating.

It is objected, then, that by this warmth in religion, and the habitual language which we hold concerning it, we claim an immediate and peculiar protection of the Deity, and place the proof of the correctness of our doctrines and practice, not on their conformity to the Holy Scriptures, but on abstractions, imaginations, and feelings; that we presume to invest ourselves with a sort of infal-



libility, and neglect the common means of moral culture and improvement: and are thus steeled against the force of those reasonings which might reduce us to a more sober habit of thought—that, in short, we are actuated by a spirit of party which has its own terms, insignia, and objects, distinct from those which necessarily accompany genuine Christianity.

To these vague accusations it might be sufficient to reply generally, that every one of them rests on misapprehension or prejudice. No such things are done. No such undue heat is excited. No such claims are asserted. No such party is formed.

The views of those ministers and private Christians, whom the author supposes to be attacked in these accusations, are precisely the same, as to all substantial truths, with those taken by the Universal Church of Christ,—with those which Augustine vindicated in the fifth century, and the noble army of Reformers in the sixteenth. Call them by what name you please, they are the old verities of the Bible, and the foundation of the Reformed churches. The utter fall and corruption of man by sin—his reasonable and accountable nature—his impotency of himself to what is spiritually good—the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity—the meritorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ—the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost in regenerating and sanctifying the heart—the duty and necessity of real repentance—justification by faith only—the indispensable obligation of good works and of a life of prayer, watchfulness, and separation from the evils of the world—the ascription of our salvation entirely to the merciful will of God—the authority and sufficiency of Holy Scripture—the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment—these are the commanding features of Christianity.

But the objection is not commonly urged against these doctrines thus largely stated, but to the application of them, to the urgent manner in which they are enforced, and the commanding influence they are required to have over the heart and conduct. This is only in other words to maintain, that for men to act fully on the great principles of religion as those who solemnly believe them to be true, and know they must be judged according to them at the last day, is an extravagant course of conduct; a position which common sense and the very first dictates of conscience may refute.—The doctrines of Christianity are not a speculation, but deep practical principles—they are to be felt as well as understood—and when they are felt, they produce a corresponding effect on the character—they place eternity full before the conscience—they lay man prostrate in penitent contrition—they raise him with the hope of pardon and salvation through a Redeemer—they require, they encourage, they produce new and holy views and pursuits, pains and pleasures, fears and joys. Till they do this, they do nothing; and that they may do this, the Holy Spirit sheds his grace like dew upon the church, to soften, and fertilize, and bless it. And the sincerity and ardor with which the ministers of religion press these truths on the attention of mankind, is one of the chief means which the Holy Spirit employs in his sacred operations.

But the doctrine of the particular providence of God is accused as enthusiastic, and we are said to claim an immediate and peculiar protection of the Deity. Undoubtedly we hold the Scriptural doctrine of an over-ruling Providence. We believe that “God is about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways”—that “the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”—that “the Lord ordereth a good man’s goings, and maketh his way acceptable to himself”—that “not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father”—that “the hairs of our head are all numbered”—and that “his angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that are heirs of salvation.”—Undoubtedly we not only admit these encouraging truths, but believe, embrace, rely on them under all the sorrows of life. Undoubtedly we endeavor to give full life and efficacy to them, and bring them into the habitual tenor of the spirit and conduct. But then the whole Bible proceeds on this doctrine of a particular providence. One essential difference between Scripture history and every other, is, that the history of Scripture represents the world as God’s world, to use Bishop Butler’s expression—where God is the author of every thing, and all the hearts of men are controlled by Him according to his supreme pleasure. The Bible lifts up the veil which shrouds human affairs, and shows us God’s hand at work where we are accustomed to see only the conflict and confusion of human passions. The histories of Abraham, of Jacob, of David, assign all events, even the smallest, to the divine will: and the devotional and prophetic parts of the Old Testament are comments on the historical in the same view; whilst the New Testament joins on upon the Old, and exhibits the same providence as directing all the various and most minute occurrences in the lives of our Lord and the Apostles.

The same providence overrules all things in every age—or the promises of God to the church have failed. We have not indeed now the inspired comment on the designs of this providence, we have no miraculous directions of the Spirit in concurrence with it, we have no assurance of the results of each particular undertaking. And herein lies much of the distinction between Patriarchs and Apostles, and the ordinary Christian. The scrutiny of the Divine Providence is as minute and penetrating now as in former times; but in the interpretation of its purposes, we have no longer an extraordinary guidance—nor do we claim any. We follow the rule of the moral law of God, and the apparent duty resulting from the combination and comparison of all our circumstances. We act under the direction of ordinary Christian prudence in the choice of our measures. We wait for the long event of things in order to infer the will of God. We diligently notice all the numerous incidental points which concur to a lawful end, in order to warrant even any probable conclusion as to the divine purposes therein.

But this is no more than to say, that the Christian now lives in an ordinary period of the church. Still the doctrine of a particular providence is not less his comfort and stay. He is not less sure that nothing escapes the vigilance, nothing eludes the power, nothing defeats the designs of his Al-

mighty Father and Friend. He is not less persuaded that the great God sits, as a moral Governor, on "the circle of the heavens," and ruleth by an ever wakeful providence all the affairs of men—that he stoops to the smallest and most inconsiderable matters, as well as regulates and comprehends the greatest—that he provides for the growth of the lily, whilst he orders and marshals the stars—that he guards the humblest individual Christian as "the apple of an eye;" and at the same time stills, in his general and universal government "the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people"—that to Him nothing is great, nothing is little—that all space is one undivided point, and all time, one eternal now.

In contemplating this stupendous agency of the Divine hand, we have only to avoid the dangers before alluded to. The infirmity of man may mistake or abuse the purest truths. We must check every appearance of presumption. We must not allow any concurrence of circumstances to induce us to depart from duties of primary obligation, arising from the revealed will of God. Nothing in itself morally wrong, can become right, because Providence may seem to us to favor it. We must also guard against hastily interpreting the designs of God as favoring our own projects in the course of our affairs, however just and good in themselves.

We must likewise be particularly cautious, in applying the doctrine of God's providence in a marked and express manner, to those slight, and comparatively trifling occasions, which are of perpetual occurrence in human life. The reason is, that if we act so, we give them a disproportionate importance, and distort our view, by an attention to small things, from a due regard to much greater ones. A general feeling of dependence and gratitude, in this respect, is all that, with our contracted minds, we seem capable of exercising aright. We should also abstain from those terms and expressions in speaking of the providence of God, which may reasonably endanger the solemnity of religion, and expose it to contempt and ridicule. But these are merely suggestions as to the proportion and manner of bestowing our thoughts on the proceedings of the Divine Providence, and are designed to strengthen, not diminish, the faith with which we hold the truth itself, and apply it wisely and habitually to all the course of human events. Such cautions are constantly given by the ministers of religion, not only as to this, but also as to every other great doctrine of the Bible; they clearly prove that we do not abuse these doctrines in the manner objected; and therefore they confirm what we assert as to the purity of our general principles.

But I pass on to another class of objections. It is said that we place the proof of the correctness of what we believe and practice on feelings, and imaginations, and abstractions, and not on their conformity to the holy Scriptures. A charge utterly groundless. The contrary is so entirely the case, that there is nothing on which we more insist, than on the danger of relying on affections and feelings, to the exclusion of the written word of God. The proof of the correctness of what we believe and practice is the holy Scriptures, and

the holy Scriptures only. We have no other criterion, no other standard—"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this rule, it is because they have no light in them." Nor is it easy to divine from what mistake this singular charge has arisen, unless it be from confounding the due use of the affections in suberviency to holy, enlightened reason and faith, with the wild dominion of those affections when left without guidance or restraint—two things about as distinct as any that can be named in the compass of practical theology. Certainly we maintain that the affections, that all the affections of the soul, must be engaged in religion, as well as the understanding and will. We maintain that we are to love God as well as obey him; and in order that we may obey him, we maintain that the infinite benefits of Christ warrant, demand, excite, enkindle correspondent acts of acknowledgment, gratitude, love; we maintain that religion is a spiritual thing, the offspring of grace, implanted by the Holy Ghost, and rising far above morals, and nature, and philosophy, and the unassisted powers of man.

But then we constantly appeal to the Holy Scriptures as the authority, and standard, and rule, to which all these affections are to be referred, and by which they are to be judged. And the proof of the correctness of this judgment we ultimately place, as the Bible does, in the proper fruits of holy tempers, obedient conduct, watchful self-denial, every good word and work. We esteem the affections and require the exercise of them, in proportion as they produce, and because they were designed by our Creator to produce, the vigorous efforts of a righteous and benevolent life. We only transfer them from the service of sin to the obedience of God—that is, we do not spike the cannon and dismantle the walls of the subdued fortress; but make them available to new uses, and direct them against the common enemy.

The charge of assuming a species of infallibility may be refuted in a sentence. For who ever claimed any thing like an infallible accuracy of judgment in the things of religion? Where and when were these presumptuous rights asserted? What! is all the humility of the true Christian, all his self-abasement, all his distrust and meekness, all his fear of God and man, come to this? that he vindicates to himself unerring prudence, and stands on an equality with prophets and apostles! No; we are not so vain nor so wicked. We presume not on any extraordinary, miraculous, plenary inspiration of the Spirit. We presume not to found a new religion, or abrogate an old; to plant a novel church, or prescribe fresh rules of truth and duty. We claim only that ordinary and sanctifying influence of the blessed Spirit, which our Lord promised as the abiding consolation of his followers, and which accompanies and distinguishes his church in every age. We claim only those secret, imperceptible, gentle influences of grace, which, in a manner agreeable to our reasonable nature, enable us to understand the Scriptures, perceive and know our danger, flee from impending wrath, lay hold on Jesus Christ for salvation, and honor and obey him from a principle of gratitude and love. The mistake has possibly arisen from confounding that assurance



of these great truths, which faith communicates, with a claim of personal infallibility. For certainly we have an assurance of the main doctrines of the Gospel, which rises far above the confidence of speculative deduction, and which gives a persuasion that cold reasoning cannot produce. Certainly we apprehend the vast discoveries of Christ, not by rational conclusions merely, but by a lively faith, which gives a demonstration and substance to things unseen, and renders near and palpable the distant objects of hope. Certainly we have a full satisfaction of mind in the verities of the Gospel, which is above and beyond, though never contrary to, reason, and which sheds forth a light and glory which reason cannot bestow, and knows not how to appreciate.

These observations prepare an answer to the fourth objection, that we neglect the means of moral culture and improvement, and are steeled against the force of the soundest reasoning and argument. For the truth is, we honor reason, and cherish it by the most careful education and discipline. We cultivate all the means of moral improvement. We train, we instruct, we warn, we exhort, we persuade. We strengthen the opening faculties, and form them to investigation and argument. We check all the luxuriance of a young, and all wildness of a hasty and vagrant imagination. We consider that God makes use of means, both in moving the affections, and in informing the understanding. We endeavor, therefore, to invest religion with all that is venerable, and attractive, and generous, and engaging. We seat her in the noblest powers of the soul. We surround her with the rational evidences and credentials which become a divine religion, and by which it claims the obedience of man. We deduce with solicitude all her tenets from the holy records. We weigh, we compare, we receive, we embrace, all the various parts of the inspired volume. We give to every new suggestion, as to the import of its instructions, all the attention which it can demand. We listen to the remonstrances even of an adversary, and deduce from them, if it be possible, some practical directions for our future conduct. We allot to reason and moral culture all that wide province which they are capable of occupying. But, after all, we rely for the efficacy which is to sanctify and save, on what they cannot give, an influence from above, the grace of the Blessed Spirit. We do not forget the doctrine of original corruption on the one hand, nor of the divine grace on the other. And we so attend to the means of moral improvement and the force of reasoning, as to recollect their inefficiency, under the actual circumstances of man, except as subordinate to the illumination of the PRIMARY TEACHER. In human literature and matters of outward decorum and discipline, we assign them a transcendent office; in divine learning and the renewal of the heart, a ministerial only. This, this is the dictate of the best reason; this, this is Christian Philosophy; to honor, but not to deify, the powers of the understanding; to use, but not to rely on, moral suasion to raise and strengthen, in short, the efforts of man by a simple recurrence to the grace of God; to add illumination to reasoning, and sanctifying influence to morals; and never to rest till the one

is transformed into faith, and the other elevated and purified into holiness.

But we have not yet removed the whole of the objections against spiritual religion. We are accused of cherishing a spirit of party—we are said to have our petty marks, and terms, and objects, distinct from the accompaniments of genuine Christianity—an accusation plausible, perhaps, to a hasty or inaccurate reasoner, because it may be readily alleged against any body of persons who think alike, and who therefore will commonly act together;—plausible, because, when every fair objection is silenced and all solid grounds of reason taken away, it is the cheap resource of an exhausted mind, and serves to cover the disgrace of discomfiture—plausible, because when a revival of pure religion commences, and the number of truly holy and active Christians in any church has been for a time small, a broad, fundamental distinction of character is unavoidable and praiseworthy, is the result and proof of a divine operation, and the test of a sincere return to God—plausible, because when the minds of men are prejudiced by the secret love of the world, and do not discern the infinite moment of evangelical truth and evangelical practice, they naturally ascribe that to the effect of party-spirit which flows from contrition of heart, love to Christ, and charity towards those who obey his Gospel: not to say that the objector thus eludes the force of conviction, and turns aside the shafts of exhortation and rebuke. But to resolve all that is peculiar to vital Christianity into a spirit of party, is precisely to beg the question in dispute—to shut out the entrance of repentance, and to bar up the mind against the light of truth.

But plausible as this objection may be, to some, how weak is it when attentively considered! What is there of the culpable spirit of party in the clergy or the private Christians who are the objects of the imputation? Do they insist on any certain terms and expressions as supplying the place of conversion? Do they excuse or palliate moral evils when committed by those who side with them? Do they push any truths and doctrines to such an extent as to exclude others? Do they prefer their petty interests to the public good of the church or the community? Do they connive at popular mistakes or excesses in order to subserve their cause? Do they place the proofs of piety and love, in inferior, doubtful, isolated matters? Do they condemn indiscriminately and harshly those who differ from them? Do they aim at the persons, not the errors, of their opponents? Do they exclude from their love and esteem those who are not within a certain pale, however excellent? Do they cherish a narrow, selfish, personal feeling, in opposition to the expanded, disinterested charity of true religion? Have they any peculiar and unworthy pursuits, and dishonorable and hidden schemes which they endeavor to compass—anything distinct from the discharge of their high duties to God and their neighbors?

But why do I pursue these inquiries? For how contrary is the spirit of every pious Christian to the conduct which is implied in such questions? We appeal to all who know us. We appeal to our lives and conversation, to our parishes and

neighborhoods, to our sermons and writings. No: it is not a spirit of party which animates us. We delight in charity and peace. We rejoice in opening wide our arms to all who love and serve our Saviour. We labour continually to break down all separating walls, to remove obstacles, to lessen differences of opinion, and promote goodwill and amity. It is our aim to place religion on the broad, catholic, intelligible ground, where Apostles and Prophets left it, and from which controversialists have too often dislodged it. If any thing of a party-spirit appears, we discourage and repress the evil with more diligence than almost any other. And on this and every other subject we keep our minds open to conviction, and correct continually whatever is found to be doubtful or inexpedient. We abstain from many things on the principle of not giving offence—we endeavor to become, in matters indifferent, “all things to all men, that by all means we may gain some.”

What gives occasion, perhaps, to the charge is a matter high and spiritual, and touching on the deepest mysteries of redemption. For there is undoubtedly in every age a mystical “body of Christ,” “an assembly and church of the first-born,” “a people of God,” a “chosen heritage,” who are distinct from the merely visible and external communities professing the Christian name. These form the spiritual and invisible church of Christ, extending over all the earth, animated by grace, glorying in the cross of their Lord, and known by their spirit of penitence, love, separation from the world, benevolence, zeal, holiness, joy. These constitute, not a party, contracted and jealous, sunk in some inferior interests, and bound together by prejudice or passion, but the faithful servants of God, who love and serve him in truth, who share his favor, and are heirs of his kingdom. They have the closest communion with each other—they are united by the holiest ties—they pursue the greatest and noblest ends—they confer on all around them the most substantial benefits—they give every proof of sincerity by their constant labors, and, if called to it, by their patient sufferings. To belong to their fellowship, is to be a Christian. The entrance to it is by penitence and faith. The clue to all its secrets is holy love. The insignia which it bears, is the mysterious doctrine of the cross. The language it speaks, is the soft learning of benevolence and meekness. The fruit it produces, is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

And this, in fact, brings us to the true spring of all the objections against the zeal and warmth with which we propagate truth, as well as against the particular doctrines of the Gospel with which they are connected, and on which they rest. There is an opposition in the human heart to the humiliating yoke of Christ. The pride of man resists the doctrines, and the sensuality of man the precepts and restraints of revelation. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And this resistance, disguised under the mask of objections, more or less plausible, is the hidden source of the opposition raised against what is now termed in scorn, evangelical religion.

In every age this has been the case. Truth has made its way but slowly, and amidst reluctant

disciples. In a Protestant country, indeed, and in a church whose principles are purely scriptural, much is conceded. A national creed is defended. The great outlines of redemption are espoused. But still men deny these very truths in the real extent and application of them as laid down in holy Scripture. They deny the full plain statement of the fall and corruption and impotency of man. They refine and dispute against the real truth of our justification by faith only in the merits of Christ. They plainly resist the doctrine of the Holy Ghost as the author of spiritual life, and the source of all light and grace. They exclaim against those imperative calls to separation from the follies of the world, and to a holy, devout, watchful, self-denying life, which the Gospel addresses to us. They spurn at the idea of loving God and holding communion with him by meditation and prayer. They know nothing of the entire dedication of all and every faculty, and power, and talent, to the glory of God and the good of mankind, as the element and happiness of the renewed soul. The consequence is, that these various truths are curtailed, weakened, omitted, denied, as occasions serve, and the current of public sentiment allows. A standard of orthodoxy is raised which suits well with a tame religion, and passes as reputable amongst men; but which leaves out or despises spiritual and fervent piety. Names of reproach are invented to designate what is termed excessive devotion; and men in general learn to join in the cry, and satisfy themselves with a cold external Christianity, correct perhaps in its tenets, but lifeless and uninfluential in its spirit; whilst they mask the real hatred they bear to truth, by representing it to be a mass of extravagant or weak opinions.

Just in proportion as religion is made practical, and is exhibited in the conduct and life, is it distasteful to mankind. The doctrine of a particular Providence—the exercise of the affections on the Divine Saviour—the humble assurance of faith—the expressions and fruits of holy love—active zeal for propagating the Gospel around us—the consistency of a Christian behaviour in all the details of life—are beyond measure offensive, for the plain reason that they disturb men in their indifference, place God and eternity full before them, and remind them of the judgment which we all must so soon undergo.

Such being the case, let me entreat any reader who has been listening to the misrepresentations which spring from these sources, and of which the objections current in the present day, and already considered, are only one unavoidable effect, to pause before he ventures to dismiss so momentous a subject. Let me entreat him to enter himself seriously on the business of religion. I do not want now to combat his particular objections, but to gain his attention generally to the first simple commands of Christianity. Let him place himself as before that throne where we must quickly appear. Let him begin the great work of repentance for himself. Let him study the rule of God’s law, that he may attain the knowledge of his sins. Let him try to affect his heart with that sense of them which the Scripture requires. He will soon discern his difficulties—the reluctance of his nature—the perverseness of his will—the rebellion of his



passions—the feebleness of his purposes—his own impotency to what is spiritually good. He will find that his prayers, his efforts, his resolutions, will be insufficient to overcome his sins and form his habits to holiness. In this painful extremity, let him read the declarations of Scripture as to the grace and work of the Holy Spirit. He will perceive that this is precisely what he needs. Here is a promise of bestowing a tender heart, a divine principle, a superinduced and holy bias, a new framing of the soul, a heavenly birth. Let him then go on to implore these blessings for himself: and in the diligent use of all moral culture, and the various means of grace, he will obtain the proffered aid. He will gradually be “a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things will pass away, behold all things will become new.” Nature will be melted down, as it were, and recoined. The strong man armed, will be bound and cast out of the fortress, and the Saviour enter and reign there. The penitent is thus brought, so to speak, into a new world; he discerns and appreciates spiritual things, and rises as far above mere reason, as reason is elevated above the animal powers. What is the result? A new and holy character is gradually created—new habits, new pursuits, new affections, a new course of conduct.

Whilst the convert is learning these practical lessons as to the necessity of grace, he will also acquire a correspondent knowledge of his need of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. His tender conscience compares all his actions and pursuits with the holy law which demands perfect and uninterrupted obedience. He discerns his guilt. He finds that one sin exposes him to the just anger of Almighty God. What then must his innumerable daily offences of thought, word, and deed, deserve? These considerations prepare him for welcoming the glad tidings of pardon and acceptance in the propitiatory death of the Divine Redeemer. Christ now arises as the Sun of Righteousness upon his view. The incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God, his life, his sufferings, his resurrection, his glory, become the object of all his trust. He understands the great mystery of God being “just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” He “counts all things but loss, that he may win Christ.” Thus does his religion assume a totally different character. He actually reposes on the merits and death of his Saviour for justification, and implores fervently and constantly the aid of the Holy Spirit for strength to obey God. He renounces his own righteousness as to the one, and his own power as to the other; and the consequence is, a new ardor and purity of life and devotedness to God’s service. All the springs of gratitude and love are touched. The heart is gained. Christ is enthroned in the affections. That love of God with which man was filled at his first creation, and which was extinguished at the fall, is now rekindled. Christianity has produced a surprising recovery. The fallen creature is restored. God becomes his Lord, his Sovereign, his Master, his end by a new and willing choice. Henceforth “he lives, not” as he formerly did, and as all men by nature do, “unto himself,” but “unto Him that died for him and rose again”—and he does this, “constrained by the love of Christ;” that is,

actuated by the efficacious motives of the Gospel, and elevated and purified by its grace and benefits.

The degree of activity and self-denial which we have above insisted on as essential to real Christianity, now appears to him natural, obligatory, practicable, delightful. All is in its place. The superstructure suits and becomes the foundation. The edifice rises grand and proportionate in all its parts. The duties and affections which appeared to him extravagant and impossible, whilst he was far from God and immured in the pursuits of the world, now seem necessary and easy. They agree with his acquired habits, they are the spontaneous actings of his new principles, they are produced by lively faith, they are softened and lightened by holy love, they are maintained by the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, they conform him in his life to the example of his Saviour, and they prepare him in his hopes and expectations for the eternal purity and joy of heaven. He has received not a new creed, but a new life. All the parts of Christianity hang together. The doctrines prepare for the temper and spirit. Holy obedience flows from this temper. The effectual grace of God produces and unites both. Good works attest the sincerity of the change. The blessed fruits of peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost form the best comment on the whole. The solid experience of God’s gracious aid by his providence, the stable tranquility of a mind purified by the sacrifice of Christ, the actual happiness inseparable from the love of God, the large measure of holy obedience attained by the principle of faith, the calm patience under the trials of life, and the joyful anticipation of death and judgment communicated by the promises of God—all confirm the truth and reality of this scheme of Scripture doctrine, and show also the inadequacy of every other. In the meantime, the numerous imperfections which the Christian discovers in his best efforts, the temptations to which he feels himself exposed, and the daily defects, errors, and follies of which he is conscious, tend to produce in him that genuine humility and contrition of spirit which is the last finish of the character, which keeps him always dependant on GRACE, AND GRACE ONLY, for every hope of present succor and future salvation, and which renders the gospel the potent, and suitable, and most welcome remedy for all his moral maladies and disorders.

Here is, then, the easy solution of all the complicated difficulties and objections which may at one time have perplexed his mind. A sincere trial of what religion is, affords the effectual answer to theoretic mistakes. Let the reader make the experiment only, and he shall be an example of my remarks. “If any man will do God’s will, he shall know of the doctrine.” Let him, with his Bible in his hand, pursue the great object of his own salvation, and he shall soon see the clouds and mists of prejudice dissipated from his mind. Nay, the very points in Christianity which he once viewed as difficulties, shall appear the chief helps and glories of the discovery; and he shall learn to “count all things but loss for the excellency of that knowledge of Christ” which formerly he thought “foolishness.” But he shall at the same time find, that he is becoming

to others the occasion of the very objections and remarks which he at one time entertained himself. In short, he will see that it is not any minute mistake, any charge of a party-spirit, any trifling abuse of terms, any subordinate misunderstanding of a doctrine or a precept, that can account for the wide differences of judgment and conduct between the Christian and the worldly person. The causes lie deeper, and are more firmly fixed. The question involved is the fundamental distinction between the service of God and the service of sin—between the love and faith of Christ, and barren morality—between the obedience of the whole heart to religion, and an external form—between the being alive as to God and eternity and the soul, and the being dead—between the walking in the narrow path which conducts to life, and in the broad which leads to destruction—in a word, between the rising up to the high vocation and transcendent ends of Christianity, and entering into its stupendous mysteries and designs; and the sinking down to the low standard of unaided nature, and the doubtful, inefficient canons of prejudice and fashion.

But the author will not proceed further. He has been drawn on thus almost insensibly by the earnest desire of removing some of those extraneous hindrances to a sincere conversion to God which the industry of polemical writers, and the indisposition of man to spiritual religion, have accumulated. He appeals for the truth of all these statements, to the unerring standard of Holy Scriptures, to the united testimony of all good men in every age, to the effects of divine teach-

ing and grace in each individual heart, and to the solid fruits of godliness which evangelical truth produces—he appeals, finally, and above all, to the omniscient eye of God, and to the expected decision of that last great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.

It is little for the writer of these pages to say, in conclusion, that the following Letters convey but very imperfectly his views of these Scriptural truths, and exhibit still more feebly his ideas of Scriptural holiness. Such, however, as they are, they may serve perhaps in some measure to show the sort of feeling with which the Christian traveller should, as the author thinks, habitually endeavor to acknowledge the hand and providence of God during a foreign tour; and the spirit and manner in which he should aim to conduct himself, as the servant of God, on the various occasions which such a tour continually presents, to try the force of his principles, and put to the test the meekness and fortitude of his character. It is only for the sincerity of his attempt at doing this, that the author presumes to answer. How far he succeeded, and whether his representations may be beneficial on the whole to others, he leaves to the opinion of the candid reader—or, rather, he refers it to the sentence of that God, who accepts the weakest effort to trace and adore the proceedings of his providence, and who has condescended to say, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

*Islington, July, 1825.*



## TRAVELS ON THE CONTINENT.

### LETTER I.

*Calais, June 2d.—Gand, June 23, 1823.*

Dover—Dunkirk—Pave—Mount Cassel—General Vaudamme—Lille—Duke of Marlborough—Courtray—Pulpits—Sunday at Gand—Popery—Foreign Travel—King of England.

*Ghent, Saturday, June 21st, 1823.*

WE are now fixed, my dear sister, for the Sunday; and, therefore, I have leisure to give my beloved mother and you some account of our movements. We arrived this morning at Gand, or Ghent, in the kingdom of the Netherlands, about eighteen leagues from Ostend. We had a delightful drive to Dover on Monday, and found good accommodations at the Union Hotel. Our passage to Calais in the steam vessel on Tuesday was calm and favorable. We almost all suffered from sea-sickness; but by four o'clock we sat down to dinner in excellent spirits at the Bourbon Hotel at Calais, and began to forget our troubles. It was late on Tuesday evening before we had hired two carriages for our tour; for we found that one would be inconvenient and unsafe. About eleven o'clock on Wednesday, we were on our way to the Rhine. The road annoyed us a good deal, being paved with large rough stones; and the wind was not less unpleasant, blowing fresh from the sea. We passed Gravelines, a place of considerable strength, with five lines of fortification. We started involuntarily at driving, for the first time in our lives, through the formidable works, and hearing the rattling of the iron draw-bridges under the wheels of the carriages, and hardly believed ourselves safe.

About five we reached Dunkirk, formerly the object of so much prevarication and perfidy on the part of the court of France. It is a large, noble town, with a fine port, a handsome church, streets spacious and clean, and the appearance of a good deal of trade. There is a great air of comfort and neatness about this part of French Flanders; but the most deplorable superstitions are prevalent every where. Enormous, ill-formed crucifixes stare you in the face on the public roads: the figure of our blessed Lord being exhibited in the most forbidding, and even disgusting forms imaginable. And the moment you enter into conversation with the people, you are surprised and affected at the degree of ignorance and superstition which they betray. At this town, some of the peasants we talked with actually called the Protestants *Jews*, confounding them indiscriminately with all who reject the Roman Catholic faith. The adoration paid to the image of the Virgin

Mary quite appals the mind; the worship of our Saviour is comparatively forgotten. In fact, the Virgin seems almost to engross the veneration of the Papist, and to supersede every thing else.

On Thursday we set off for Mount Cassel, a beautiful spot, seven leagues from Dunkirk, from the lofty summit of which thirty-two towns and four hundred villages are said to be visible, though I could not discern near so many. The view, however, was magnificent. A vast panorama stretched all around. Nature was arrayed in her most beautiful attire, and the eye was delighted in attempting to trace out the variegated wonders of the spectacle. On one side of the hill, towards its foot, General Vaudamme has erected a noble edifice, and laid out a considerable space of ground in gardens and pleasure walks. The spoils of war are displayed in different parts with much taste; but I confess the reflections they awakened in my mind, very much lessened my admiration of them: I could not help thinking of the injustice and cruelty with which most of them were acquired. No glory is solid which violates the first principles of morals.

We reached the celebrated town of Lille about nine in the evening. It was almost dark, and we were afraid the gates would have been shut. It contains sixty-two thousand inhabitants; its works render it a fortress of the first rank, and its citadel is second to none in Europe. The Duke of Marlborough's siege is perhaps the best encomium on these works. Indeed, what mingled recollections are excited in the mind, when travelling over these scenes of former conflict and glory! An English family driving peacefully and undisturbed through Dunkirk or Lille, is quite an important event, when one remembers the history of the two last centuries; and the indignation or alarm which the very names of these towns kindled in the breasts of our forefathers. Thank God for those national mercies which are connected with the annals, however mournful in themselves, of past warfare! The preservation of the Protestant religion in Europe, and the establishment of that religion, and of all the other blessings of our glorious revolution of 1688, in England, where the effects of the hard-fought fields of the incomparable British commander—I said incomparable, but I check myself, for the splendid triumphs of WELLINGTON, place him on a level with England's greatest captains.

I called on the Protestant minister at Lille—only about two hundred and fifty Protestants—feeble, alarmed, dejected—Popery surrounding and watching them with a jealous eye—the French government contracting their privileges—the spirit of the Reformation almost fled. Still there is a Bible Society, which is always a seed

of future blessings. The place is famous for its manufactures. The men gain three or four francs a day (the franc is now worth ninepence or ninepence halfpenny English,) the women one franc, and the children nearly the same. Food is about a third part cheaper than in London. The women are without bonnets; a sort of high cap supplies the place of them; the wooden shoe is common.

We came on Friday to Courtray, a beautifully neat town; but, alas! the whole place seemed given up to superstition. Lamps are suspended throughout the streets before the images of the Virgin, as if she were a guardian deity. In England we have little idea of the state of things in Catholic Europe, or of our own blessings.

Here, as well as at Gand and a village lying between them, we have seen some of those fine pulpits which are so much admired, and so justly, in the Netherlands. You see I am adverting to a professional topic—every one understands best what relates to his own calling. One pulpit resembled a palm tree, the trunk concealing within it the stairs; the foliage forming the sounding-board, and an immense sort of pumpkin the pulpit itself, which an angel supported underneath. The next was sustained by four female figures as large as life; the sounding-board was surmounted by a cherub raising the cross; angels stooping around to admire. The third was almost entirely of the finest white marble; an angel underneath opened the Bible to an old man, at these striking words, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." Another angel at the sounding-board was blowing the trumpet of the Gospel; whilst a third was sustaining the cross.

If any thing like pure doctrine were delivered from these pulpits, all would be well. But what a contrast is there between the magnificent pulpits and the mean and unworthy tenets inculcated from them! We are really quite melancholy at witnessing the scenes around us. It seems wholly unaccountable, how men, with the New Testament in their hands, should be deluded and bound down by so gross an imposture as Popery. But I forget myself; the New Testament is not in their hands. The Pope first shuts that sacred book, and then imposes his own traditions. And besides, the Scriptures represent Popery as the "power of error," as "a strong delusion," as "the deceivableness of unrighteousness," as "the working of Satan with signs and lying wonders," as a judicial blindness for the neglect and abuse of light and knowledge, "because men loved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." There is accordingly a fixed, unalterable attachment to Popery in the minds of the people, a kind of devoted, unsuspecting allegiance, "a bowing down of the soul," that their spiritual tyrants "may go over."

But I must bid you farewell to-night. We have come forty-five leagues, about one hundred and forty-four English miles from Calais. One of our carriages gave way at Vive St. Eloi, about seven miles from Courtray, a bar of iron behind being broken through by the pavé. We paid four francs for some cords to repair it, which were worth five sous—about sixteen times their value.

This accident detained us two hours on the road, and will keep us here, perhaps, over Sunday: otherwise we should have reached Antwerp to-night. The post does not go out till Tuesday, so that I may add a word or two to-morrow, or Monday.

*Gand, Sunday Night, June 22d.*—We found to-day an English service at the Protestant church. The prayers were well read, and the sermon was tolerable. The clergyman dined with us after church, and gave us a great deal of useful information. He was a pleasant, and, I hope, a pious man. As there was no Protestant service in the afternoon, I went to one of the Catholic churches. It was the first time I had ever witnessed the full display of Popish ceremonies. Really the processions, prostrations, bells, incense, music, chauntings, &c. made up a sort of stage-effect, of which I had had no conception. It seemed to me to be just calculated to deceive mankind. Animal emotion and bodily services were put for faith and the obedience of the heart. The senses were charmed and seduced, instead of the understanding being informed, and the passions subdued. Every thing was not merely unfavorable to spiritual worship, but almost irreconcilable with it. Still the diligent attention of these poor people to their ceremonies, and their apparent devotion and seriousness in the performance of their religious duties, are examples to those who boast a purer creed. We never entered a town, but many were at prayers. Yesterday evening the churches were filled. To-day you can scarcely enter them for the crowd. The Catholics have no idea of being called Christians, and yet neglecting the public worship which Christianity enjoins. The common people, at least, are sincere and in earnest. Their principles are obscure and superstitious, but they are firmly fixed in their minds, and they act upon them.

It is difficult for a Protestant traveller to recover from the surprise excited by these degenerate forms of religion, and to divest himself so far of his habitual associations as calmly to weigh all the effects and circumstances of the system which he is contemplating. Unquestionably, large allowances are to be made for individual piety, under the disadvantages of early habit and education, in a Catholic country. But I must say, that Popery, as a whole, disgusts me more now I see it in act, than when I had merely read of it. Undoubtedly, its worst and most prominent feature is, the idolatry of the Virgin Mary; an immediate consequence of this is, the indirect or open denial of all the chief doctrines of the Gospel; the corruption of the rule of Christian morals\* follows al-

\* As to the denial of Christian doctrine, hear the language of Luther: "In confession, the Papists make no mention of faith, or the merits of Christ, but only enjoin human satisfactions and merits; as may be seen in the following form of absolution, which the monks use, and those the most devout amongst them, and which I willingly copy out, that posterity may understand the infinite and inefable abominations of Popery.

"May God spare thee, Brother,  
"The merit of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the blessed Mary, always a virgin, and of all the saints, the merit of your order, the



most of course; and the effect of all this is, the tacit but certain encouragement which is given to skepticism and infidelity. I leave out a hundred other topics—indulgences—transubstantiation—infallibility—traditions—persecution—exclusion from salvation of all not within its pale, &c. &c. Thank God for the Reformation!

In the evening we had service in our family—the evening prayers of our church, and a sermon. I was much inclined to offer to preach this morning at the English service; but I abstained from a sense of duty—my health is now my first object. My heart and thoughts have been continually at St. John's.\*

*Gand, June 23d. Monday morning.*—We have had an excellent night—all well to-day. We are now going to visit the principal curiosities of this ancient town; and shall probably set off for Antwerp in the afternoon. To-morrow we hope to be at Brussels, and on Wednesday to be pressing on towards the Rhine, the magnificent scenery of which river is a great attraction to us. We mean to enter Switzerland by Schaffhausen. Our movements are too rapid to derive any thing like the full advantages of what is called foreign travel. We are come out only for our health. Still we make all the observations we are able, on the habits and customs, the language and government, the policies and religion of different people. We try to study and contemplate men, as Bishop Hurd, I think, expresses it, as they present themselves on the great stage of the world, in various forms, and under different appearances; and we compare every thing with what we have seen or read at home. All this will enlarge, as I hope, our minds, without too much dissipating the attention. It will also tend to lessen undue national prejudices. It will teach us to appreciate the blessings of a free government and a pure religion, and will send us home better fitted to discharge our ordinary duties, and more eager to communicate spiritual benefit to others.

I should tell you that the roads are shocking. Indeed, I need not say this, after having mentioned the pavé; for this forms all the middle part of the roads, and is beyond measure worse than the stones of London streets, or those on our Cheshire and Lancashire roads, whilst on each side you have commonly a deep sand. Carriages break

weight of your religious duties, the humility of your confession, the contrition of your heart, the good works which you have done and will do for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, obtain for thee the remission of thy sins, the increase of merit and grace, and the reward of eternal life. Amen.

Comm. in Gal. p. 117. Ed. Witenberg, 1535.

Of the corruption of the RULE OF DUTY, let the Jesuits stand as witnesses. Who can have read Pascal's Provincial Letters without having been astonished at the profligacy of their code of morals; or rather at the virtual overthrow of uprightness, purity, and truth amongst men, which that code occasions and patronizes; and on which their conduct, as an order, for nearly three hundred years, has been too frequently the comment?

I say nothing of the worship of the Virgin, or the secret prevalence of infidelity, because these evils are acknowledged.

\* St. John's, Bedford Row, London, at that time the author's chapel.

down constantly; sometimes the first day; and generally before the end of the week. We were informed at Lille, that when his majesty the king of England passed through, the year before last, on his way to Hanover, the royal carriage broke down just at the entrance of the town, and that the king was glad to accept the offer of a French nobleman, who made a tender of his own. Farewell.

Believe me your affectionate Brother,  
D. W.

## LETTER II.

*Brussels, June 27.—Liege, July 1, 1823.*

Gand—Nunnery—Chrysostom—Louis XVIII.—Lord Gambier—Antwerp—Bonaparte—Scheldt—Brussels—St. Gudule—Popery—The Martyr Tynedale—Namur—Village of Waterloo—King of England—Coster—Battle of Waterloo—Huy—Liege.

*BRUSSELS, Friday, June 27, 1823.*

MY DEAR SISTER—I sent off my first letter from Ghent, on Monday, June 23. I begin a second letter against the next post-day. We took our view of the city of Ghent on Monday morning.—It stands upon twenty-six islands, connected by three hundred small wooden bridges. It has above sixty thousand inhabitants. A nunnery, where six or seven hundred females maintain themselves by spinning, and other like works, much gratified us. There is less of superstition in this establishment, and more of obvious usefulness, than in any I have yet seen. Charity and diligence seem united, as they ought to be. The nuns are the nurses of the whole town, making it their business to visit and assist the sick. The public library is one of the finest buildings in Europe; entirely of black and white marble. An inscription, taken from St. Chrysostom, very much pleased me, *Lectio Scripturarum munitio est adversus peccatum*; "The reading of the Scriptures is the defence against sin"—no obscure testimony against the present practice of the church of Rome.

The Cathedral is sumptuous and superstitious beyond all imagination. We ascended the tower by four hundred and sixty-four steps, and thence obtained a rich coup-d'œil of the whole city. It has all the marks of departed grandeur. It was once the rival of Paris, and the capital of the Belgic provinces. It boasted of being the birth-place of Charles the Fifth, and of containing the largest area of any city on the Continent.\* It has now a dull and deserted appearance. Its power and glory are gone. Other cities eclipse its fame. It is thus that all earthly distinctions fade away, and that legislators are taught that the proudest eminence of national prosperity may be undermined and destroyed. Gand has acquired a temporary interest of late, from Louis XVIII. having fled to it during the usurpation of the hundred days; and from our brave Admiral Lord Gambier having

\* The circuit of the walls is little less than fifteen miles.

here met the American Commissioners, and concluded the late treaty of peace.

At two, our carriages being repaired, we set off for Antwerp; eleven leagues, thirty miles English. As we approached it, the magnificent tower of the Cathedral appeared directly in our view—466 feet high, of the most delicate architecture, and rising at the top to the finest point imaginable—one of the most splendid things of the kind in Europe. The Scheldt river, however, flowing between us and the city, we had to pass a quarter of a league in a ferry-boat before we could reach it. As we walked up to the inn, gaudy images of the Virgin offended us at the corner of almost every street; forty or fifty of these, with lamps suspended before them, are scattered over the city, and priests and friars meet you at every turn. The town is most handsome and noble, like the former capital of European commerce. The harbor can contain a thousand vessels. The Scheldt here seemed to me broader than our Thames at London; it flows close up to the place. We saw a beautiful pulpit, in the church of St. James, supported by female figures as large as life, representing Truth, Faith, Theology, and Learning; an union excellent and comely. It requires only that these should be practically embodied in the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church, to produce a second Reformation.

But what most interested us were the extensive docks and naval storehouses begun by Bonaparte in 1803, and carried on till the period of his fall. These were to surpass all that Europe could produce, and were to contribute to the overthrow of British commerce and British power. It is with a mixture of surprise and triumph that Englishmen survey the defeated schemes and half-accomplished projects of that extraordinary man, and most bitter enemy of their country.

At three the next day, Tuesday, June 24, we drove off to Brussels, where we arrived at nine in the evening. On our way we passed through Villeforte, where our English Reformer, Tyndale, is said to have been imprisoned. He was afterwards burnt by the procurator of the emperor's court at Brussels, in 1536. His crime was the translation of the New Testament into English! This is the first trace we have seen of that noble army of martyrs to whose labors and sufferings we owe the blessings of the Reformation. We have been now detained at Brussels three days for repairing a second time the carriages—dislocated, weakened, shattered almost, with these pavés. The city is beautifully situated, partly on a hill and partly in the valley; it has one hundred thousand inhabitants, with boulevards encircling it, which will, when finished, be about six miles in extent. The chamber of the *Etats Généraux*, or States General, is really quite charming, much more elegant and commodious than our English house of commons. The only misfortune is, that, with all this exterior beauty, the life of political institutions is wanting—that spirit of regulated freedom—that happy balance of the different powers of the state—that independence and liberty of discussion—that influence on public opinion, which render the British parliament the glory of the world. Catholics and Protestants sit indiscriminately in the chamber of deputies.

The royal palaces at Brussels and at Lacken, three miles from the town, are pleasing. The chief church of St. Gudule is, like all the other Catholic churches, loaded with images of saints and the Virgin. It has sixteen chapels. A priest showed us the chief curiosities, and told us, with perfect sangfroid, that some Jews having, four centuries ago, stolen the host from the church and stabbed it, blood miraculously issued from it and destroyed them! The pulpit here again is exquisite; it is supported by figures of Adam and Eve driven out of Eden by an angel, with Death triumphing over their ruin. The stairs and back of the pulpit represent the garden of Eden, with the different animals around. The sounding board represents the descent of the Holy Spirit, and is surmounted by our Saviour, and what always accompanies him, the Virgin. The museum and library are fine; one hundred thousand volumes, and many exquisite pictures of Rubens. We here saw the first book printed at Brussels, in the year 1476, entitled *Speculum Conscientie*.

We have been introduced to a very pious Protestant gentleman, who has shown us the greatest kindness. To him we owe the obligation of examining our carriages, and recommending us to a respectable coachmaker. We have been sadly imposed upon. An Englishman should, if possible obtain an introduction to some merchant at Calais or Brussels, or he will probably be put off with miserable, ruined vehicles, decked up for the occasion, which will fail him, as ours have done, the very first day or two of his journey. This gentleman talked to us much on the state of religion. He loves England. He considers that things are rather improving upon the whole here; still the gross, heavy superstition of Popery weighs down the consciences of men, and darkens the fair front of Christianity. Bonaparte is the idol, and the present government unpopular; but Popery, after all, is the permanent obstacle to religious improvement. My friend ardently hopes, as I am sure I do, that the pure truth of the Gospel will once more spread through Europe; and silently, but effectually, dissipate all anti-christian errors, whether on the side of infidelity or superstition.

*Namur, Sunday, June 29.*—A city almost entirely Roman Catholic! Twenty thousand souls, and scarcely a Protestant family! Not so much as a single sermon that I could hear of, in any of the parish churches throughout the day, for the people of the town! Thank God, the military from Holland and Switzerland have Protestant chaplains and services in a chapel built for them by the present King of the Netherlands, who is himself, as you know, of the Protestant religion. As soon as breakfast was over, we had the morning prayers of our own church and a sermon; our little congregation was seven as usual. At twelve, I went to the Military Chapel, to hear the German sermon, of which I found I could not understand a word—I have lost my German. I conversed afterwards with the chaplain, who spoke pretty good French; he was a sensible and pious young man. I said all I could to encourage him in a bold and manly profession of the gospel. In the afternoon, we went to the Cathedral—Popish service—building fine—pulpit of beautiful, though unadorned, marble. We are now about to have



our second domestic service. How I pity these Catholics, brought up to worship, not the God and Father of all, but the Virgin Mary and the Saints!—Farewell.

*Namur, Monday morning.*—We are now going off for Liege; we hope to be at Spa on Wednesday; at Aix la Chapelle, Thursday; Cologne on the Rhine (where the pavé ends,) Saturday. At Brussels, we engaged with a Swiss voiturier, who had come here with four horses from Rome, to conduct us to Berne. We left Brussels at nine on Saturday, and at eleven were on the field of Waterloo. The small village church contains twenty-two monuments of English officers who fell on that memorable spot, with suitable inscriptions—a most affecting sight. In an adjoining plot is the burial ground of four hundred of our brave soldiers. His Majesty the King of England was most minute in his inquiries, when he was here two years back. He even visited the garden where Lord Anglesey's leg was interred. The field of Waterloo itself is covered with corn; but the hedge leading to Ohain, the farm of Haie Sainte, Huguemont, Planchenoir, &c. remain.—The spot where the last attack was made on the English by the Imperial Guard, is marked by a pillar, and also that where General Gordon fell. The Wellington tree was brought to England two years ago, and is at the British Museum.

Jean Baptiste de Coster, Bonaparte's guide, was ours. We took great pains in distinguishing him from a multitude of impostors who deceive the unwary, by claiming his name. He is an elderly man, full of enthusiasm in his description of the battle. We spent an hour with him on this fearful scene of England's glory. He led us to the very spot where the hottest part of the battle took place. It is impossible to give you any idea of the horrors which he described. The mind shudders at the thoughts of the sufferings of our brave men, and of the wide-spread desolations of that terrific day. Even now the corn displays a rank luxuriance on the ensanguined field. The bones of the dead are dug up by the rude hand of the laborer.\* The marks of the balls may still be traced on many of the trees, and relics of the spoils are offered you at every turn. What a deliverance for Europe was wrought on those plains! What praises do we owe to God for the security, happiness, and power which were all achieved or confirmed to Britain by that mighty conquest.

Really, when one reflects on the character of Bonaparte, on his prodigious successes, on his confessed skill as a general, on his prodigality of human life, on the efforts which he then made, and on the possible consequences of his gaining the field, one's heart swells with gratitude and thanksgiving to the God of battles, who fortified the breast of our noble commander during the fearful struggle, and crowned him with the most important victory which the annals of history, ancient or modern, can boast. It is a curious cir-

cumstance, that the Duke of Marlborough, a hundred years before, had fixed on the same plains for giving battle to the French army, and was only withheld from engaging by the timidity of the Dutch Deputies.

We reached Namur at nine, after a journey on pavé of forty-four miles. It is a strongly fortified place, celebrated for the long sieges which it sustained at the close of the last century but one; and, like all frontier towns, has been the perpetual scene of bloodshed and misery. Forty thousand soldiers were quartered here in 1815 under Grouchy. It stands on the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse or Maese; behind it a fine mountain rises adorned with hanging wood, and crowned with tremendous fortifications. It forms the back ground of the picture. The walk by the river side is exquisite.

*Huy, Twelve o'clock, Monday, June 30.*—We have been four hours and a half coming to this beautiful town. The road has been by the side of the Meuse, seventeen miles. The hanging woods, the rocks, the villages, the windings of the river, the ruined castles, and a road of fine smooth earth, not pavé, formed one of the most striking and beautiful drives I have ever taken. The cliffs and woods, in some places, were sublime.—The rain of yesterday had laid the dust, and brightened the verdure on the face of nature. The peculiar feature was the trees and woods, interspersed amongst the rude rocks in the most picturesque manner. At this place we ascended the fortress, which Lord Wellington, as we were told, has been six years directing several thousand men to construct, and which is considered to be impregnable. The walls are in some places ten or eleven feet thick.

*Liege, Tuesday, July 1.*—We arrived here last night, the road continuing equally beautiful; but the heat of the day, especially in the morning, was very great, and we find ourselves a good deal fatigued. To-day is the post, and therefore I close this letter. I found no letters from England at Brussels, but hope to receive some at Cologne. We are all well.

I am, &c.

D. W.

P. S. We have underrated the distance we have travelled; the leagues are two miles and three quarters English; so that we have now gone about two hundred and seventy-five miles from Calais. We have two coachmen, and two beautiful white horses to each carriage. Liege contains nothing very remarkable. It stands in a picturesque spot on the side of a hill; a small river banked with stone walls, runs through it; and the gardens coming down to the river, are beautiful; a promenade, with trees, affords a delightful walk all around. In coming here we saw the sides of the mountains, for the first time, covered with vineyards. We had occasion to call on a clockmaker in the Great Square. He seemed an acute, sensible man. A deeply fixed discontent was apparent, notwithstanding his attempts to conceal it. The recollection of Bonaparte was vivid in his mind. So we find it every where almost.

\* Scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis  
Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,  
Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila,  
Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes,  
Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

VIRG. Georg. I. 493.

## LETTER III.

*Spa, July 1.—Coblentz, July 10, 1823.*

Road to Spa—Verviers—Aix la Chapelle—Charlemagne—Relics—King of England—Juliers—St. Austin—Sunday at Bergheim—Cologne—St. Ursula—Tomb of Magi—Bonn—University of Catholics and Protestants—The Rhine—Drachensfels—Remagen—Andernach—Coblentz—Timber-boat—Spy.

*SPA, Tuesday, July 1, 1823.*

MY DEAR SISTER—We have safely arrived at this beautiful spot—a romantic watering place, well known by fame to you and every one else, for its mineral springs. The road from Liege is mountainous, and in many places highly picturesque; and as we approached Spa, we travelled along a deep hollow with lofty cliffs on each side of us covered with hanging woods. Below the road ran a small but rapid river, winding along the valley, which having been swollen by the recent rains, was imimitably beautiful. On our road, we stopped an hour at a small inn, in the chamber of which I found a sort of chapel, dressed up with a crucifix, and many superstitious ornaments: underneath, however, was a copy of verses so pious, that I transcribed them, and send them for your benefit. I think them admirable: possibly they may be an extract from Corneille's Translation of Thomas à Kempis.

*La Sainte Volonté de Dieu; la Folie de la Croix; ou, Maximes de la Sagesse Evangélique.*

Domptez vos passions, faites-vous violence:  
Mortifiez vos désirs, chérissiez le silence.  
Croyez sincèrement chacun meilleur que vous;  
Jugez de tous au bien, soyez affable à tous;  
Ne vous prévalez pas du mal que font les autres;  
Excusez leur défauts, humiliez vous des vôtres.  
Détournez votre esprit des objets curieux;  
Ménagez vos momens, car ils sont précieux.  
Évitez avec soin l'amitié trop humaine;  
Elle trouble le cœur, et ne produit que peine.  
Obeissez gaîment, ne murmurez jamais;  
Votre âme jouira d'une solide paix.  
Que cette paix seroit durable et salutaire;  
Si l'on n'avoit le cœur qu'à son unique affaire.  
Et si l'on savoit bien graver dans l'esprit;  
Que le monde n'est rien, si l'on n'a Jesus Christ.

Heureux qui prend le temps comme Dieu le lui donne;

Des biens, des maux présens, sait faire son profit;  
Et qui pour l'avenir au Seigneur s'abandonne,  
Disant, content de tout, *Dieu le veut, il suffit.*

*Spa, Wednesday, July 2.*—We have had a beautiful day. This village is surrounded with the finest rides and walks imaginable. The waters were known to the Romans, and are mentioned by Pliny. They were in repute throughout Europe, as early as the fourteenth century. They spring from the adjacent hills, which are said to be formed of calcareous earth, mixed with silicious substances. They are all a strong chalybeate; and some of them are impregnated with

sulphur. Their flavor very little differs from that of common water, except that they have a taste of iron. The water from the Pouhon spring is the strongest, and is exported to almost every part of the world. The place has fallen off since the last war, and is now apparently going to decay. The German bathing-towns are superseding it. We shall stay here over to-morrow probably.

Little did I think I should ever spend a birthday at Spa; but so it is. I am forty-five to-day. With how many mercies surrounded; with how much to lament in myself! Time how swift! This world how vain, how unsatisfying! May the salutary springs of this place lead me to recollect and to thirst more ardently for that fountain of "living waters, which springeth up unto everlasting life!"

*Aix La Chapelle, Saturday, July 5.*—We left Spa on Thursday after dinner, and came by a delightful road to Verviers, a town, eleven miles distant, remarkable for a small river, the waters of which are used in dyeing clothes. The town is situated in a valley; a promenade made half way up on one side of a hill commands the place, and affords an exquisite prospect. The town is before you, overtopped by the green hills behind it; between the town and the foot of the hill are the gardens of the houses in the main street, running down to the river, over which bridges are thrown, that add much to the whole effect. The number of inhabitants is about ten thousand. We saw a multitude of persons in the evening kneeling down on the outside of one of the church doors, uttering miserable cries before the image of a saint. We are now come to German servants, and find our French of little use to us.

On Friday morning, at seven o'clock, we came to Aix, twenty-five miles; here we enter the dominions of the king of Prussia. This city is associated with every thing grand in modern Europe. The peace of 1748 was signed here; and at the Hotel de Ville is an immense picture of all the ambassadors who were present on that occasion: unfortunately they are not portraits. A tower of this building was erected by the Romans. The baths of hot sulphureous water, of the heat of one hundred and forty-three degrees of Fahrenheit, gave the town the name of Aix, a corruption from *aqua*, waters. The cathedral was built by Charlemagne in 804, and yet preserves his throne of white marble, in which thirty-six emperors of Germany have been crowned. Over his tomb is a plain stone with this simple inscription, *Carolo Magno*.

The pulpit is not remarkable for its architecture; but around the sounding-board are these words, "But we preach Christ." Alas! the fact is, they now preach the Virgin Mary; before whose image we saw, what may be seen every day, a person kneeling with uplifted hands in prayer. The relics of this church are encased in immense shrines of silver gilt, set with precious stones. A priest gravely showed us a nail and several pieces of the wood of the cross; the sponge, in which the vinegar was offered to our Saviour; a part of the girdle of our Lord; a link of the chain with which St. Peter was martyred; an arm and some of the hair of John the Baptist; a tooth of St. Thomas; some bones of Simeon, &c. It was



with the utmost difficulty I could keep my countenance. I asked the priest if all these things were matters of faith. He replied, "No, but they rest on the most undoubted historical evidence"—which, for my part, I always thought was the proper ground of faith as to a matter of fact. These relics are publicly exhibited for fifteen days once in seven years. About 40,000 persons daily crowd to see them during that time. In 1545 more than 100,000 came every day for this purpose. How gross are the impositions of this corrupt church! May the blessed Spirit of Grace hasten the time when truth shall once more triumph over its Papal, as it did over its Pagan foes!

Aix is surrounded with beautiful boulevards; and the adjoining hill of Louisbourg commands a fine view of the city. The allied monarchs were here for three months, four years back; and our own beloved king the year before last. His affability and generosity won every heart. English newspapers are, I am told, prohibited throughout most of the Prussian states—we could find none. Every creature is brim-full of discontent; and much beyond the occasion, I should think.

*Bergheim, Saturday evening, July 5.*—We have finished our journey for the week. We left Aix this morning for Juliers, eighteen miles. Here we were shown an ancient portrait of the greatest of the Christian fathers, St. Austin, with this inscription, "Saint Aurelius Augustinus, the pillar and teacher of the church, the abyss of wisdom, the terror of heretics, the restorer of the apostolical life." If the doctrine of Austin had but been preserved uncorrupted in the church, there would have been no need of a Reformation, eleven centuries after his death, to revive the evangelical truth which he taught. After dinner, (which now costs us twenty-pence a head,) we set off for this village, where are six hundred and fifty souls, and scarcely a Protestant. It is a sweet, calm place; the hotel clean, people attentive, beds comfortable. Our host was a fine young man, one of Bonaparte's soldiers, and not at all disguising his hatred of the Prussian government. In the house opposite, the royal family of France received the news of the detention of Louis XVI., at Varennes, in 1792. Farewell, for to-night.

*Monday morning, July 8.*—Yesterday we had our English service twice, as usual. My college friend, whom I shall often have occasion to speak of, preached to us most excellently. A Protestant sermon is doubly delightful now we are annoyed and disgusted with Popish doctrines and corruptions on all hands. The church here is filled with superstitions; a procession of two hundred persons came eighteen miles, yesterday, to sing hymns in honor of the Virgin. Still the attention of the people at church was very great; their prayer-books are in Latin and German. Under an image of our Lord, we found these words, "Thou who passest by, honour always the image of Christ; but adore not the image, but him whom it represents." It is thus precisely that a heathen priest would have excused his idolatry. We inquire all we can as to the state of the people. The children in the Prussian states are forced to go to school; all read and write; the men are husbandmen, and get six or seven francs a week, and their food; the women three francs. The people

are discontented. They conceive themselves degraded by being taken from France, a leading power in Europe, and made an appendage on Prussia. Their trade and wealth have sensibly diminished.

*Bonn on the Rhine, Tuesday, July 9.*—We left Bergheim yesterday at seven, and came to Cologne by ten, fourteen miles—for we never go more than about four miles an hour. We spent seven hours in visiting this most ancient and curious city, Cologne. The Rhine here first burst upon us; a noble, broad, rich flood, rushing from the Lake of Constance, and flowing on with a gradually retarded stream, to Holland, more than seven hundred miles—I should rather say, rushing from the Grisons through the lakes of Constance. Cologne was a city built by the Romans, of whom many memorials remain. A large room in the old Jesuits' College is filled with Roman sarcophagi, altars, bas-reliefs, and inscriptions found in the town and neighborhood. The venerable Professor Walraf, after fifty-five years spent in the collection of antiquities and specimens of the fine arts, still lives to enjoy his reputation. On the fiftieth anniversary of his professorship—which is soon approaching—a fête is to be given him by all the authorities of the town.

The churches, convents, &c. are numerous: amounting, it is said, to one hundred and eighty-five in number. The Cathedral is a stupendous unfinished edifice, which was two hundred and fifty years in building. Here we were shown—can you imagine it?—the tomb of the three wise men who visited our Lord. Actually so! The front of the tomb in which their pretended skulls are placed, is of gold, enriched with oriental topaz. Their names, Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar, are fixed beneath in letters of rubies, their bodies are enshrined in massy silver gilt, adorned with precious stones. Yet three centuries back this city was all but Protestant. The Archbishop, Herman Count de Wied, had actually espoused the Reformation. But the Popish party prevailed; the pious archbishop was deprived of his see, and the dawning light was smothered or extinguished. What guilt is incurred by those who trifle away the "time of their visitation!"\*

We visited the church where Rubens was baptized, and that where St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins were interred.† The town is strongly fortified, has fifty thousand souls, and one thousand three hundred Protestants; amongst whom, I am told, there are many most excellent and spiritually-minded persons. The city is an-

\* I can refer now with great pleasure to the interesting details on this subject in the Rev. J. Scott's able continuation of Milner's Church History, 1826.

† "The hugest fraud of this kind (as to relics) that ever was practised, was when the contents of a whole cemetery were brought forth as the bones of eleven thousand British virgins, all bound from Cornwall, to be married in Armorica, carried by tempests up the Rhine to the city of Cologne, and there martyred by an army of Huns under Attila. Even this legend obtained credit; all parts of Christendom were eager to acquire a portion of the relics, and at this day a church may be seen at Cologne, literally lined with the bones."—SOUTHNEY'S Book of the Church, vol. i. p. 293.

nexed to Prussia. We noticed a most magnificent organ in one of the churches—the gallery composed entirely of marble, with statues of the apostles and patriarchs in the front of it—the whole supported by marble pillars, and filling up an entire corner of the church. It is splendid beyond conception.

*Remagen on the Rhine, Tuesday evening.*—We have had a most charming day. At Bonn, I enquired after a Lutheran clergyman with whom I had made some acquaintance in England, a most pious and sensible man. The person whom I addressed, immediately said he knew him, and that he had just sent around his letter to announce his approaching marriage—for I found that it is the custom of all respectable persons here to write circular notes to their friends, to inform them of the day of their intended marriage—in England we rather conceal such an intention. I soon met with my friend, and he conducted us over the University of Bonn, founded, in 1819, by the king of Prussia—five hundred and twenty students, half Protestant and half Catholic—eighteen professors—library, fifty-five thousand volumes.—The college, a former palace of the Elector of Cologne, of immense extent. There is said to be a considerable revival of piety among Catholics and Protestants here. The estimate of real Christianity rises, its vital truths are better appreciated, and circumstantials less vehemently insisted on. There is an excellent Bible Society; and in consequence the nature of spiritual religion, as well as its obligation, is understood. The leading Catholics are sensible men, and their churches here are almost entirely free from altars and images.

Still Popery in itself is the same; and as soon as a Catholic priest preaches the Gospel purely, he is, somehow or other, removed or banished by his superiors; though he cannot be further persecuted, as the king is a Protestant. I hear that one priest in Alsace has been the means of converting forty families in his parish. The kings of Prussia and the Netherlands are Protestants. This is a great point, and is working considerable good, and would work more, if Protestant princes understood better the great principles of the reformed faith, and felt more deeply the obligation of acting upon them. At the period of the Reformation, religion actuated the counsels of kings, and entered into the policy of alliances; and ministers of state took into account their responsibility to God for the cause of the pure faith of Christ committed to their care.

Our drive from Bonn to this place, Remagen, by the banks of the Rhine, was exquisite; words can give you no idea of it. A fine river, five or six hundred feet broad, with continual windings, opening into bays; on each side villages, with beautiful spires; vineyards, crags, corn-fields, interspersed: the scenery now rising with magnificence, now sinking into softer beauty; distant mountains bounding the prospect; nothing can be conceived more splendid and lovely. We alighted at Mehlem, and crossed the Rhine at Königs-winter, to ascend the lofty mountains of Drachenfels, one thousand eight hundred feet above the level of the river, and commanding an astonishing view. A monument is here erected in

remembrance of the passage of the Rhine by the German troops near this place in 1814. As soon as the guide reached the summit, he exclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest"—Gloria Deo in excelsis—a pleasing remnant of ancient piety.

As I walked down the hill, I asked our guide if he had a Bible. He told me he had, and that he read it constantly.—I asked him a few questions about the Old and New Testament history; when I discovered that his Bible was a pamphlet of 18 or 19 pages, drawn up by the priests. He had no idea that there was any book such as we mean by the Bible—so sad is the ignorance of these poor people. The corn harvest is begun. The vintage is not till the middle of October. Every thing here depends on the vine: the landlords let portions of land to tenants for half the crop of grapes of each year; the punishment for eating any grapes is five francs the first offence, and four days' imprisonment the second. The wine is thirteen pence the bottle. During the brief time of the vintage, the people employed eat as many grapes as they like.

*Coblentz, July 10, Wednesday.*—We have just arrived at this town, which, from its immense fortifications seems to be the key of Germany. We left Remagen at nine this morning, and dined at Andernach, near which place it is thought that Julius Cæsar crossed the Rhine. The dinners here annoy us; nothing is simple and plain; hashes, stews, oils, dirt. Andernach is a curious town—very old—full of remains of Roman antiquity—a gate built by Augustus. But it is the road along the Rhine which is most interesting; for ten or twelve miles the diversified scenes, and beauty of the views, exceeded all the conceptions which I had previously formed: vineyards, rocks, mountains, every thing that can enchant the eye, and fill it with gratitude to the Author of every blessing. Here we intend sleeping. We are four hundred and forty miles from Calais, and all well, and surrounded with the goodness and mercy of God!

We have now smooth roads, without pavé, and the weather is charming. Coblentz is beautifully situated on the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle. A bridge of boats crosses the Rhine. The view on each side is exquisite. The river flows with a strong current, and is, I should think, about one thousand feet wide at this part. We here saw some of those timber floats, for which the Rhine is so celebrated. When the various smaller floats are united, they form an immense raft, about 1000 feet long, and 90 broad, which is managed and piloted in its course by 400 men, and when sold in Holland produces about 10,000*l.* sterling. The vast pieces of timber are firmly joined to each other, and temporary wooden houses are built on them for the accommodation of the men. We hope to be at Franckfort on Saturday, and at Basle sometime about Tuesday week, July 22.

I am yours, D. W.

P. S. After dinner, as we were sitting in a café here in Coblentz reading the journals, a gentleman-looking man, seeing us to be strangers, addressed us. He began by asking me some common questions; but soon turned the conversation to politics, and inveighed warmly against the



existing Prussian government, and the want of freedom amongst the continental nations. He went on to extol the liberty and riches of England. His manner surprised me; and having heard that spies were often employed to induce strangers to disclose their sentiments, I was very reserved. Upon this he plainly asked me what I thought about the Holy Alliance, and the invasion of Spain by the French. I replied, that I was a minister of religion: that my information was far too slight to enable me to give a correct opinion; that as a stranger I took no part in the politics of the countries through which I travelled; but cultivated a spirit of good-will towards all nations. He was evidently chagrined, and rudely turned away from me. I thus escaped, as I imagine, the surveillance of the police, or perhaps a summary order to leave the country. Sir Henry Wotton recommended our great poet, Milton, when about to travel on the continent in 1638, "to keep his thoughts close and his countenance open"—advice not inappropriate after a lapse of nearly two centuries.

#### LETTER IV.

*St. Goar, July 11.—Carlsruhe, July 19, 1823.*

Scenery of Rhine—Ehrenbreitstein—French Monument of Campaign in Russia—Discontent—Hirtzenach—Jew—Bingen—Vineyard—Weisbaden—Violation of Sabbath—Mentz—Franckfort—English Newspapers—Conversion of Priest—Göthe—Revival of Religion—Darmstadt—Leander Van Ess—Oppenheim—Storks' nest—Heidelberg—Martin Luther—Professor—Castle—Manheim—Flying Bridge—Schwetzingen—Carlsruhe—Floods.

*ST. GOAR, on the west bank of the Rhine, 460 miles from Calais, Friday, June 11, 1823.*

WE are now, my dear sister, in the very heart of the most beautiful part of the Rhine. From Bonn to Mentz, ninety-seven miles, the route is by the side of this majestic flood. Magnificence and beauty are united in the highest imaginable degree. The loftiest rocks, craggy, crowned with ancient and dilapidated towers, rise before you, so as sometimes to darken the scene, and are then joined and softened by a perpetual garden. The profusion of vegetation all around, especially the luxuriant vines, carried up every chink and crevice where the sun can reach; the beauty and freshness now shed over them, together with their fragrant smell as they are flowering, compose a scene quite inconceivable to those who have not witnessed it. Hundreds of small villages also, with spires towering above them, and perhaps an old fortification and gates, or a ruined château, are scattered on the banks on each side, whilst the ever-flowing Rhine, deep and rich, expands itself into a lake, or presses on between abrupt rocks, or embraces, every now and then, an island filled with fruit-trees and vines;—conceive of all this, and you will allow me, without blame, to be a little enthusiastic. The noble road which the French have raised by the margin of the stream, and without pavé, increases the pleasure of this part of our journey. I think I never felt such warm emotions of grati-

tude to the Almighty Giver of all good, as since I have been passing through this scene of wonders.

The spot where we now are, (St. Goar) for example, is enclosed on all hands by the most variegated mountain scenery. The ruins of Reichensfels are above the town; at our feet is the Rhine: on the opposite shore is Goarhausen, crowned with a Roman fortification. The sun is shedding its glories on all sides, whilst the broken rocks and valleys receive or reject his rays, and create the most grateful alternations of light and shade. Last night we hired a boat, and ascended the river to witness the setting sun and observe the two shores in unbroken luxuriance. Every reach forms in fact a superb lake: we passed from one to another, comparing the different beauties which each presented to us with a lavish hand. The scene was majestic indeed; and the last rays of the orb of day tinging the mountain tops, and throwing a glow over the waters, completed, so to speak, the picture.

But I must, absolutely, tear myself from this topic to tell you, that at Coblenz we ascended the heights of Ehrenbreitstein, an impregnable fortress, commanding a prospect beyond measure extensive. The point of greatest beauty was the junction of the Rhine and the Moselle. The Moselle, with its deep red stream, meets the yellow waters of the Rhine; and the combat between the two is most surprising. They do not mix. At the mouth of the Moselle, the division of the two waters is so strongly marked, that you would think a dam had been interposed; but the Rhine forms, with its larger current, an overpowering barrier against its weaker neighbor, whose waters creep along the shore till they are gradually lost in their course. We visited only one church at Coblenz, St. Castor—for the beauties and simple majesty of the divine works in CREATION, gave us no great taste for the superstitions of a church which has been employed so many hundred years in deforming the greatest of all the works of God, REDEMPTION.

A noble fountain, however, attracted our attention; it was built by the French in 1812, and bears this inscription: "1812, *Memorable pour la Campagne contre les Russes.*"—Beneath this, the Russians, in 1814, added these words: "*Sous le prefecture de Jules Doazan, vu et approuvé par nous, Commandant Russe de la ville de Coblenz, 1st January, 1814.*" A mixture of great good and great evil seems to have followed the rule of France for twenty-three years over the Pays Bas, and the countries on the Rhine. The convents are abolished; the Protestants have churches; the cities and roads are improved and beautified; education is promoted; knowledge and truth have entrance; Popery has received a deadly blow; commerce, art, industry, property, are revived and quickened. But, what a painful catalogue of miseries, injustice, ruin, infidelity, vice, must be drawn up on the contrary side! On the whole, it must be admitted, that the population is still favorable to the French, and would wish to return to them as masters. The memory of Bonaparte is too much cherished, loved, adored every where. May God, the Sovereign Ruler and Saviour of mankind, educe good from the confusion and tu-

mult of human passions and conflicts! The peaceful Gospel of Christ is the only remedy for a distracted sinful world.

At Hirtzenach, a village near St. Goar, we halted at a small inn, where the master was a Jew, who refused to give us plates and knives, &c. because we were Christians; and looked anxiously into our tin boxes, to see what food we had with us. The first article was part of a ham. However, with unaccountable inconsistency, he went to a neighboring house, fetched all we wanted, and placed them before us. I read to him from his Hebrew Bible some prophecies of the Messiah, which he seemed very little to understand, and still less to take any interest in. Last night our supper here (St. Goar) was curious; first, soup, something worse than water-gruel; next, boiled veal; then chicken, stuffed with bread pudding, and accompanied with cherry sauce and salad; then cold salmon, cut in slices; next, roast mutton; lastly, cakes and cherries. We are now in the heart of the wine country. The finest white wine is here exactly thirteen pence (twenty-six sous) the bottle; and for large bottles, twenty pence (forty sous).

*Bingen, Friday evening, July 11.*—We have now quitted Prussian Germany, and entered the Grand Duchy of Hesse Darmstadt. We are four hundred and seventy-seven miles from Calais.—We spent this morning in taking a second excursion on the Rhine, at St. Goar, for three hours, where new beauties continually presented themselves. At half-past twelve we dined at the Table d'Hôte, and at two came on seventeen miles to this town, Bingen, of four thousand souls. It stands on the confluence of the Rhine and the Nahe. The waters of the Rhine, being here confined by shelving rocks, form a narrow strait.—The road to it was actually one garden for sweetness, whilst its rude, magnificent scenery sustained an awful grandeur all around. We arrived at six, and have been taking, for the first time, a walk in a vineyard; it belongs to a gentleman of Bingen, and covers about five acres, on a lovely hill, commanding beautiful views of the Nahe and the Rhine; and on the summit presenting the ruins of a Roman castle. These five acres yield nearly seven pipes of wine, of one thousand two hundred bottles each, selling in retail at about thirteen pence the bottle. As we returned to our inn, at half-past eight, we stepped into the church, the religious gloom of which, just as the evening was coming on, was inimitably fine. Adieu.

*Weisbaden, in the Duchy of Nassau, Sunday, July 13, 1823.*—This is our fourth Sunday since we left London. We hoped to have reached Frankfort yesterday, but the horses could take us no farther than this German watering-place, so celebrated for its hot baths. We have had our private service twice, but could find only German Protestants for public worship. We are now in the dominions of a Protestant prince; but what a state of things for a Sunday! The shops all open—a ball at our inn this evening—music at dinner—public places crowded—the whole village in disorder—not an appearance of devotion! This blotting out, as it were, of the Sabbath from the days of the week, is quite frightful—it is like the blotting out of the covenant of mercy between

God and man. I have hitherto had chiefly to tell you of Catholic superstitions—but, alas! the name of Protestantism, what is it? All is here as bad, or worse than in Popish towns, with a criminality infinitely deeper. I speak of the impression made on a traveller. Doubtless there are many servants of God who are keeping holy the sacred day in the retirement of their families. But Gand, Namur, and Bergheim—Catholic towns—had a far more devout aspect than Protestant Weisbaden.

*Monday, July 14.*—At Mentz, where we spent some hours on Saturday, we observed a visible decay in the cathedral; it was nearly burnt down in the revolution, and the riches plundered; the marks of the bombs are still apparent on many parts. Indeed, generally we remark, that Popery, though still formidable in so many respects, is on the decline where the French have ruled, as to its power, wealth, tyranny, and influence. The Archbishopric of Mentz was suppressed in 1802. It is still a Bishop's see; but has long been vacant. Perhaps all is preparing for the revival and prevalence of pure Christianity once more. The city of Mentz is a fine one, with astonishing fortifications; but the churches were much injured during the war, and the marks of the shells thrown into it at the siege, remain. We were in the same room at the Three Crowns, as the Duke of Wellington and all our Princes occupied, in passing through the town. It has thirty thousand inhabitants, and a fine bridge of boats over the Rhine.

I should have told you that we were much annoyed at Weisbaden with a loquacious, forward young man, who happened to sit near us at the Table d'Hôte. His officiousness quite perplexed us. We had the utmost difficulty to elude his prying questions. He talked too much to be a spy; but his pertinacious recommendation of an inn at Frankfort betrayed his secret. He must have been a man sent round to the watering-places to collect guests for particular hotels. Really one cannot be too much on one's guard abroad.

*Frankfort on the Maine, 522 miles from Calais, Monday evening.*—We arrived here to-day at one o'clock. Many things concur to render this one of the most interesting places we have visited.—It is a free city, with its own domain, burgomaster, senate, and laws—fifty thousand souls—perhaps the first commercial city in Germany—fine wide streets—large and noble private and public buildings all about—every appearance of wealth and activity. We had here the pleasure of meeting, for the first time since we left home, with English papers, a sure indication of a free state. Indeed, every thing breathes that spirit of liberty, that cheerfulness, and that prosperity, which make this town one of the most noble spots on the Continent. French, Swiss, Italians, Turks, English, all assemble in it for the purposes of commerce. It is a Protestant city; at least three-fourths of the inhabitants are Protestants. An entire equality is afforded to all the different confessions of Christians. It has seven thousand Jews, and many of them very opulent. The French Protestant Minister is a delightful man—pious, discreet, amiable, well informed. He has been with us several hours this afternoon. The police is excellently managed. Vice and wickedness are discounte-



nanced. The public places of amusement are few, and no suspicious females permitted to frequent them. What a contrast does this last point form with the disgusting indecency of our London theatres! There is here a Bible Society, and a Jews' Conversion Society.

In the public library is a copy of the edition of the Latin Vulgate Bible, printed upon vellum in 1462, by Fust and Schoeffer at Mentz. It is the first edition of the Bible with a printed date, and is an extraordinary effort of the art in its earliest day. The first Bible indeed ever printed, was begun at Mentz in 1450, and published in 1455 or 1456. It is called the *Mazarine Bible*, from having been in the library of the celebrated cardinal of that name; and is not only the first edition of the sacred text in any language, but the very first book printed with metal types. The beauty and regularity of the press-work are highly extolled by Mr. Dibdin, who speaks of it as a master-piece of skill. I cannot but dwell with delight on the first successes of the noble invention of printing, in circulating the Bible, and thus paving the way for the Reformation in the following century.

There are no foreign troops at Frankfort. I should tell you, that at Mentz there are seven thousand troops, half Prussian and half Austrian; whilst the duke of Hesse Darmstadt, to whom the town belongs, has only one hundred men to keep the police. I learnt here some particulars of the conversion of the Catholic priest whom I mentioned in my last letter.\* He lived near Pforzheim, and became impressed with the truths of real Christianity by reading the Scriptures. He then began to "preach Christ crucified." The lord of the village and forty-four families, containing between two hundred and three hundred souls, were gradually awakened by God's mercy. The priest was summoned before his superiors for preaching against the Popish ceremonies. At length he and all his flock publicly renounced the church of Rome. The duke of Baden heard of him, and went to one of his sermons. He was so much affected, that he declared he had seldom heard so edifying a discourse. He invited the priest to Carlsruhe. There is another priest, I am told, near Valenciennes, who has followed the same course. May God multiply the number, and a second reformation will soon begin.

*Oppenheim, between Darmstadt and Heidelberg, Wednesday evening, July 16.*—I had much conversation with my friend the French minister, before we left Frankfort this morning. I was also introduced to one of the senators, an excellent man, president of the Bible Society. A human philosophy applied rashly and presumptuously to religion, is the poison of German divinity among the Protestants:—endless refinements, imaginations, corruptions of faith, tending to skepticism or atheism. Things are mending, but it is incredible what daring impieties are currently received. The first genius of their country, Göthe, a native of Frankfort, is an absolute idolater of what he calls *le beau*, in Christianity, in Mahomedanism, in infidelity, in every thing. Thus unbelief stands more fatally opposed to the faith of Christ than even superstition. The calamities, however, of the late

long war have been the means of checking this incursion of infidel principles, and of bringing men back to that pure doctrine of the Gospel which only can give peace and consolation. It is a remarkable fact, that such has been the decay of all Scriptural truth amongst the Protestants, that many of the Roman Catholics have surpassed them in real piety. The light has shone brightest in the Catholic parishes. Those who were concerned for their souls, and panted for the doctrine of pardon, found some relief at least, in the discourses of the priests. So true is it that superstition, bad as it is, may consist with the life of God in the heart, but that proud infidel philosophy cannot. The one overloads and encumbers the foundation; the other digs it up, and destroys it altogether.

But to return to my narrative. We arrived safely at Darmstadt, the capital of the grand duchy of that name, at twelve to-day. I hastened to the house of Leander Van Ess, with whom I had been sometime in correspondence in England; he had left the town in the morning early to go to Cologne, and would not return for a week! A greater disappointment I scarcely ever felt. I saw, however, the study of this excellent man; I sat in his chair; I visited his collection of Bibles; I conversed with his secretary. Leander Van Ess was fifty-one the eighteenth of last month. He has left the University of Marburg, where he was professor, and lives now under the Protestant grand duke of Hesse Darmstadt. He has had a spitting of blood for four years, which prevents his preaching; but he gives himself up to the propagation of the Gospel, though he remains a Catholic priest. He has printed fourteen editions of his New Testament; each of an immense number of copies. He has circulated altogether four hundred and ninety-four thousand eight hundred and sixty. No funds but those of an institution like the noble British and Foreign Bible Society, could have supported the expense of printing such an incredible number: and the liberality and wisdom with which that society assists in publishing Catholic translations of the Scriptures, cannot be too highly praised. Versions by far inferior were the chief means of effecting the glorious Reformation. I do not speak of the Apocryphal books, because the reading of them is admitted to be useful by Protestants. The desire for the Scriptures among the Catholics at the present time, priests as well as laity, is greater and greater. Sometimes Van Ess circulates seven thousand in a single month. Lately, a priest in one parish sent for two thousand New Testaments—the parish is in the Schwarzwald, or Black Forest.

The secretary presented me with his picture, and a copy of his New Testament. What a blessing is such a person! what cannot the grace of God do in the most corrupt church! how charitable should we be in our judgment of individuals! This admirable man, though he calls himself a Catholic, has almost the spirit of a Reformer. He dwells on nothing but the great and necessary doctrines of Christianity. It is impossible to read his correspondence without perceiving a strength and clearness of judgment, an independence of principle, a love of truth, a superiority to the prejudices of education, a zeal in the diffusion of the

\* Page 48, supra.

Gospel, a disregard of personal sufferings, a hardy appeal to the first fathers of the church, and a readiness to act with Protestant societies, which are quite surprising. Above all, there is a firmness and undauntedness in all he does, which reminds us at times of Martin Luther. Let us pray that many, many such Catholic professors may be raised up in every part of the continent, and "the traditions of men" will fall of themselves.

I can hardly persuade myself to turn from this subject to say, that Darmstadt is a flourishing town; with all the marks of that activity and prosperity which, as at Franckfort, distinguishes a free from an oppressed population. We came on to Oppenheim, twenty miles, (five hundred and sixty from Calais,) this afternoon. The village is obscure, though populous. The country is pleasing. The peasants are without shoes and stockings. The men wear large hats like our English dignitaries—what we call shovel-hats; the association in our mind is very humorous. But the storks' nests are most curious; these enormous birds are in almost every village; they build on the steeples of churches, or the top of a chimney, with a large nest like a basket, stretching over on all sides. They are never disturbed, much less killed. They are superstitiously revered. The people think the house will never be burnt where a stork builds. The stork feeds on insects, frogs, mice, &c., and never injures the corn. To see these enormous birds, half as tall as a man, strutting about on the top of a house, as if on stilts, is very strange to us.

*Heidelberg, in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Friday morning, July 18.*—We arrived here yesterday, at eleven o'clock. The town is beautifully situated on the Neckar, fifteen miles from Oppenheim. The chief attraction is the ancient electoral castle, which Louis XIV. laid in ruins at the close of the seventeenth century, in his ambitious war against the Palatinate. The remaining walls were much injured by lightning sixty years back. It is still perhaps the most magnificent ruin in Germany. The keep and outward wall of the platform are entire; and a beautiful semicircular walk runs through a plantation adjoining. It is situated on the side of a fine mountain, the base and summit of which are ornamented with hanging woods. Before it, the Neckar, the bridge, the town, the adjoining hill covered with vines, the distant Rhine, and the Vosges mountains, are stretched as in perspective. The extreme steepness of the mountain on which it stands, allows of those sudden turns of scenery in the gardens and pleasure-grounds surrounding the castle, of which nothing else can admit. In short, the whole thing is the noblest of the kind we ever saw; we spent five hours in admiring it.

A venerable professor of the university conducted us; but the difficulty of finding a common language was extreme. We attempted a mixture of French, English, and Latin; but at last Latin was our only language. It would have amused you to see my college friend and myself brushing up our old Latin, and adapting our pronunciation as well as we could to the German—and this after dinner—overcome with heat—and mounting up a tremendous hill. The sentiments of the professor were evangelical, and his temper and spirit

most charitable. It was delightful to converse with a man so well instructed in the great truths of salvation. I called on him at his own house in the evening. He was very diligent in inquiring after the real state of spiritual religion in England. I see plainly that my beloved country is looked up to as the glory of the Reformation, and the hope of the nations of the continent. The university is open to Catholics and Protestants—six hundred and fifty members. It is the oldest university in Germany, having been founded in 1382. The valuable library which had been presented to the Pope, when the town was taken by the Bavarians in 1622, and deposited in the Vatican, was restored in 1815. The grand duke is a Protestant; and full liberty of worship is enjoyed. There is here a Bible Society; and religion seems, on the whole, flourishing.

It was in this place that Melancthon began his studies; that Luther came on foot from Worms, and disputed with the Augustines, in 1518; and that the famous Heidelberg catechism was afterwards published. I speak of this catechism with a peculiar pleasure, because it has been familiar to me from early youth. It was reprinted about twenty years back by the university of Oxford in the *Sylloge Confessionum*. I confess my mind lingers on these continental towns, where the noble army of reformers laid the foundation of all the religious blessings which we now enjoy.

*Manheim, Friday, July 18.*—This is a beautiful city, first founded in 1606, as a refuge for the persecuted Protestants of the Netherlands. It was entirely destroyed by Louis XIV. in 1689; so that the present city is a new one, of twenty thousand souls, half Protestants and half Catholics; the streets are regularly laid out in one hundred and twelve squares. It is situated on the confluence of the Rhine and the Neckar, and is considered the finest town in Germany. The old palace of the grand duke of Baden is very spacious, but dilapidated: it is something like our palace at Hampton Court. One of the most curious things at Manheim is the flying bridge across the Rhine. It is difficult to give a clear idea of it. But it seems formed of six or seven boats fastened together at such a distance from each other, as to extend in a slanting direction over half of the river. The extreme boat at one end of this series is fixed firm in the middle of the river by an anchor: the extreme boat at the other end reaches the shore, and is fastened to it. When any one wishes to cross the river, he enters this last boat, which is then loosened and carried by the stream to the opposite shore; the fixed boat preserving it from being carried down the current. The direction which the flying bridge takes, is like that of the pendulum of a clock.

We slept last night at Schwetzingen, celebrated for a pleasure garden of the duke of Baden, of one hundred and eighty acres, laid out in the French and English manner. The most sumptuous building in it was a mosque, resembling that at Mecca, the walls of which have inscriptions from the Koran, with translations in German; the whole must have cost an immense sum. Notwithstanding this magnificence, the approach from the village is shabby, from the utter neglect



of cleanliness in the court of the château itself, by which you enter; grass grows on the pavements, and the château is much dilapidated. Indeed, an unseemly union of finery and untidiness marks many of these foreign palaces. The palace at Mannheim is larger than any English one, but almost in ruins from inattention: kings and dukes aim here at more than they can support. The real dignity of a prince is the prosperity of his subjects. A free state, where education and morals are duly cultivated, and the pure Gospel of Christ is preached, needs no gaudy and half-finished trappings to adorn it.

*Carlsruhe, Saturday, July 19.*—We arrived here to-day, after a journey of thirty-one miles. We are now 624 from Calais. This is a beautiful town, which has sprung up about the ducal palace of Baden, around which all the streets unite like rays of the sun. The weather is fine, and sometimes rather cold; the roads generally excellent; the inns vary in accommodations. The diet is strange to us, and unfavorable to health; the bread often sour, and the meat indifferent. But still, we are all well; and can we be grateful enough to the divine hand which sustains us continually and scatters so many blessings upon our path! During a foreign tour, the recollections of what we owe to our heavenly Father daily, are much more lively and affecting than they are at home. We perceive more his constant care in the new and untried scenes through which we pass. The reflections also which are suggested by the comparison of our institutions and habits in England with those of other countries, would touch our hearts even more than they do, if we were more under the teaching and grace of the Holy Spirit. A Saturday evening abroad brings a crowd of thoughts into the mind—but I must conclude.\*

Your affectionate

D. W.

\* I cannot but add here an expression of regret upon a subject alluded to in the above letter. The Apoeryphal question, by the heat and irritation attendant upon it, has gone further to chill the spirit of unity and love at home, and the zeal and success of such distinguished individuals as Leander Van Ess abroad, than any thing that has occurred during the last 30 years. Thank God, the public mind is returning to a sounder state on a point, which, considering the avowed non-inspiration of the Apoeryphal books, on the part of the Protestant bodies, and the implied admission of the same fact by the Roman Catholic writers of all classes, has been exaggerated beyond all reasonable limits, and has in truth created more of evil in a few months, by calling public attention to those neglected books, than the books themselves had probably occasioned in three centuries. As the Reformers directed these ancient, and in some parts instructive writings, to be publicly read in churches, there surely was no reason for the clamor raised against the Bible Society for allowing them to occupy the same position—or, if the utter removal of these works was judged desirable, there was still less reason for accompanying the act with severity and suspicions. If the Apoerypha was injurious, the whole Protestant church, with Luther at its head, and not the British and Foreign Bible Society, were to blame.—March, 1827.

## LETTER V.

*Rastadt, July 20.—Schaffhausen, July 27, 1823.*

Union of Lutherans and Calvinists—Pastor Henhöfer—Importance of Gospel—Rastadt—Ulm—Kehl—Strasbourg—Cathedral—Letters of Reformers—Emmendingen—Manner of Travelling—Food—Hoellenthal—Bad Inn—Black Forest—Donauschingen—Danube—Mr. Canning—Switzerland—Schaffhausen—Innkeeper—Fall of Rhine—Swiss Sunday.

*CARLSRUH, July 20, 1823,  
Sunday afternoon.*

THIS is the fifth silent Sunday, my dearest sister, which we have spent since we left England. The town is chiefly Protestant, but German is the only language. I went this morning and spoke to the Lutheran minister, after church, but it was with the utmost difficulty we could understand each other, as he spoke neither French nor Latin; the church was well attended, and is a most beautiful edifice, built by the grand Duke of Baden, and is some evidence, I hope of the increased regard paid to religion here. I could neither understand the prayers nor the sermon—a good knowledge of German and Italian is almost as essential as that of French, to a tour on the continent.

The Lutheran and Calvinistic churches, after three centuries of division, have at length begun to unite. I hope this is another token for good. The dispute about consubstantiation will now no longer be the reproach of the Protestant communities. Few things did more harm to the infant cause of the Reformation than this sacramentarian controversy—there was so much of heat, asperity, violence, mingled with it—and this upon a point where most of the parties meant nearly the same; and which, after all, was not a fundamental one. On no occasion, perhaps, did the great Luther so far forget himself. The warmth of controversialists is generally in an inverse ratio to the real importance of the question in debate. Love is the key to truth as well as holiness.

I learn here, that the name of the converted priest whom I have mentioned to you before, is Henhöfer, and the place where he now lives, Graben, near this town; his former abode was Muhlhausen. We observe that the Catholic churches in Protestant towns, are far more simple, and less superstitious, than in other places. Here and at Franckfort, there are scarcely any altars or images—in fact, the Catholic church in this town is less ornamented than the Lutheran—but this is an inferior point—I perceive more and more that the main blessing wanted in every place is the grace of the Holy Spirit of God. I am sure we have little idea in England of the state of things abroad. We amazingly overstate the comparative amount of good effected by our societies;—the world is still “dead in trespasses and sins,”—vast tracts of barren Protestantism, or untilled and fruitless Popery, stretch all around us. May that heavenly dew descend which only can soften, penetrate, and sanctify the soil! The value of our religious advantages in England is more than ever impressed on my mind. A Sunday at home, what a blessing! The importance also of the Holy Scriptures, and of dwelling on the plain, practical, necessary truths

of the Gospel, strikes me in a most forcible manner. I see that all languishes and fades as the Gospel is forgotten or unknown. This is God's great remedy for fallen man; and nothing else will touch and change the heart. Men's devices, controversy, cold statements of truth, superstition, enthusiasm, have no efficacy to save man. The doctrine of a crucified Saviour, delivered in simple dependance on the grace of the Holy Ghost, is "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation" now, as it has been in every age.

*Rastadt, 17 miles from Carlsruhe, Monday July 21, eleven o'clock.*—We have just arrived here for our morning stage. The heat has been intense; 20 degrees, I should think, higher than on Saturday. Carlsruhe, which we have just left, is a neat, beautiful town of fourteen thousand souls, founded as late as 1715. From the palace as a centre, thirty-two lines are drawn on all sides; twenty or more of these are walks in the forest, and gardens behind it; and the rest streets, composing the town; so that from the tower of the palace you command the whole circle. Dukes here do as they please; towns must be built as objects; but I prefer our English freedom, though our cities are somewhat irregular. Rastadt, where we dine, is a town of three thousand souls, on the river Murg, celebrated for the congress between France and the empire in 1798; when two of the French envoys were murdered on their journey to Strasburg. There is a magnificent old château, in which we saw a most interesting portrait of Melancthon, and a large engraved head of the first William Pitt in 1766.

The people in this part of the duchy are poor—few manufactures—little public spirit; in other words, little liberty. The Duke takes more care of his palace than of his people. The duchess-dowager is an adopted child, or a niece, of Bonaparte. Presents from Bonaparte abound in the palace; especially, we noticed a tea-service of superb china, with coffee-run, &c. of solid gold. The dress of the peasants here continues the same, except that the women wear amazingly large straw bonnets, flapping down before and behind—children of four years old, and women reaping, have these enormous umbrella bonnets. The houses here are built with two or three jutting shades or roofs over each row of windows, formed of tiles, and have a very singular appearance.

*Ulm, thirteen miles from Rastadt, Monday evening.*—This is a small village on our way to Kehl. The thermometer, at six this afternoon, was 83° in the shade; on Saturday, it was 55° or thereabouts; for we were glad to put on cloaks and great coats. We have come thirty miles to-day, and travelled seven hours. Ulm is only a mile from the Rhine. The Black Forest stretches like an amphitheatre behind us, from Heidelberg to Basle. The country is flat, and without vines; but abounds in corn and fruits. It produces a good deal of tobacco.

*Kehl, on the Rhine, Tuesday evening, July 22d.*—We came here this morning, seventeen miles, in order to pass the Rhine, and visit Strasburg. We crossed by a bridge of boats of the extraordinary length of 3900 feet. The old wooden bridge is half destroyed. We did not take the carriages, because of duties, searchings, &c. on entering

France. We spent about six hours there. It is a city of fifty or sixty thousand souls, half Protestants and half Catholics. It has been part of France since the middle of the seventeenth century; but the manners of the people, their dress, their food, their employments, their taste, all are German. The difference between them and the inhabitants of France is quite striking. The fortifications have been newly increased and strengthened. It was the Argentoratum of the Romans, and abounds with Roman antiquities; for instance, there is a mile stone and other memorials of the reign of the emperor Trajan.

The cathedral is one of the very finest in Christendom: it was founded in 510. The tower is four hundred and seventy feet; forty-six feet higher than St. Peter's at Rome;\* it is said to be the loftiest building in the world after the pyramids of Egypt. It is a masterpiece of architecture, being built of hewn stone, cut with such delicacy as to give it some resemblance to lace. As you ascend, one half of what, in other towers, are walls, is here open work, with single iron cross-bars; the ascent is rather fearful; but the view of the Rhine, of the Ill, and the Brensch, (rivers here falling into it,) of the city, and all the surrounding country, is most beautiful. The day was very wet, so that we could not reach the extreme summit. The entrances of the cathedral are particularly fine from the excellent preservation of the rich stone-work with which they are adorned; the figures ornamenting in groups every part, are still perfect, and have a striking effect—in short, we could not satisfy ourselves in beholding this monument of the arts, which combines the most elegant symmetry of parts with the most entire solidity and the greatest magnificence.

We visited St. Thomas's, a noble Protestant church, fine, simple, majestic. A monument in white marble, to the memory of Marshal Saxe, adorns one end of the nave. We saw two bodies of the families of the counts of Nassau, preserved many centuries, and placed in coffins with glass at the top; one female, one man; each in full dress, the woman most gayly attired; the rings of pearl too large for the withered fingers; the face all in powder, falling on the bones of the skull; the whole an affecting lesson of mortality, and of the inefficacy of all attempts to hide the deformity of death by a splendor, which only increases it by contrast. Nature shudders at dissolution; the real victory over death is by faith in the triumphant and risen Saviour.

There are ten other churches in the city. We visited the royal palace, the cabinet of natural history, the museum, and the library. This last pleased me exceedingly—one hundred and fifty thousand volumes; MSS. of the New Testament, and of the classics, of the ninth and tenth centuries; early editions, &c. What most gratified me was a collection of MS. letters of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and the other Reformers. I could not but gaze with veneration on the very hand-writing of these holy men, into whose labors we have entered. The hand-writing of our queen Elizabeth was not half so interesting to me. In

\* St. Peter's is 421 feet high; St. Paul's at London 340.



the same library we noticed with pleasure forty-three volumes of Bibles, presented by the British and Foreign Bible Society; great care was apparently taken of them. I called afterwards on the secretary of the Bible Society here, to try to encourage him a little in that sacred work; the importance of which strikes me more and more, as I observe every where the fatal effects of the neglect of the Scriptures. The secretary was evidently gratified, and wished much to engage me to attend a special meeting of the committee. We also saw here the Bible printed at Strasburg in 1466, supposed to be the first ever printed in Germany; which is undoubtedly a mistake.

The university of Strasburg contains thirty professors, and nine hundred students, Catholics and Protestants. This union throughout the parts of Germany we have visited, is one of which I am anxious to ascertain the real tendency. When I ask, I am uniformly told, that no jealousy, no debates follow, between the professors and students; but moderation and peace, though without intimacy. It seems an extraordinary thing how modest and reasonable, comparatively speaking, Popery can become, when stripped of its temporal power and divested of a party spirit. It never has stood, it cannot stand before the Holy Scriptures. The New Testament contains nothing of the peculiar dogmas of Popery. Those who read that sacred book learn a totally different doctrine. The circulation of the Bible seems to me the most inoffensive, and yet efficacious, means of sapping superstition and idolatry now, as it was in the sixteenth century.

Our host to-night has given us a melancholy account of this village, Kehl. It is on this side of the Rhine, as Strasburg is on the other; three times it was burnt down in the last war; there were formerly two thousand inhabitants, there are now six hundred. It was pillaged whenever the armies passed. It is a place of great importance, in a military sense, for the defence of Strasburg, and for operations on the Rhine. What a blessing is peace! Commerce is not active here; the people say the taxes overburden them at home, and the English undersell them abroad.

*Wednesday morning.*—We were awoke this morning at five with the noise of cannon. The whole house shook: it was only the soldiers exercising; but I cannot describe how frightful it was to peaceful and unpractised travellers; what must, then, the horrors of war itself be!

*Emmendingen, 33 miles from Kehl, Wednesday evening, July 23.*—We have had a delightful drive to-day, through nineteen towns and villages, near the Rhine still, though not within sight of it. In some places the prospect was magnificent; the loftiest mountains in varied outline before us, and a sweet fore-ground of villages, spires, and woods. Occasionally we have vineyards; but hemp and hops abound. The houses are sometimes painted in front with various devices of flowers, balustrades, and other ornaments. The signs at the inns are of cut or cast iron figures, with gilded ornaments. Some of the women wear long hair, plaited, reaching behind almost to the feet, or else two long ribbons in a similar way. As we enter the villages, sometimes a whole band of peasants take off their hats and salute us, with the utmost complaisance.

The town we are now at is just below an immense mountain, the Kandelberg, three thousand nine hundred and three feet high, with the Vosges on the right, which divide Germany from France. The Rhine is seven leagues off. The cultivation here is not well managed; there are no hedges; and patches of corn, hemp, hops, potatoes, vines, seem all intermixed in one spot.

It would be amusing to you to see our cavalcade as we go on. We are nine in all, in two landaulets; Mrs. W., my little daughter Eliza, and myself, in one, and the servant on the box with the coachman; our friend and fellow-traveller with my two sons in the other. My boys change about with me from time to time. We have three horses in one carriage, and two in the other. Our chief coachman is of the Pays de Vaud; a civil, obliging, sensible, clever man, thoroughly acquainted with his business. He talks French, German, and Italian. We pay him forty-eight francs (about two pounds) a day when he works, and twenty-four francs when he rests. We generally rise in the morning at five, and start at seven, and go a stage of four or five hours, sixteen or eighteen miles; dine at twelve, or half-past, staying three hours; and then take our second stage of four or five hours, till seven or eight; then we drink tea or sup, as we like, and retire to our rooms at nine. We generally find one person in the inn who speaks a kind of French, and then all goes on smoothly; but sometimes you would laugh at the figure we all make in a German inn, without a soul to understand us: I, with my dictionary, endeavoring to recall my old forgotten German, as well as I can; till at last, Mrs. W., our friend, the boys, the inn-keeper, the chamber-maids, and the coachman, are all in the room together, before we can make out what we want.

Then the kind of beds we meet with—sometimes not a blanket in the house; sometimes an unpleasant odor pervading the chambers; often floors grimed with dirt, no curtains, no window-shutters, no carpets; small, hard, narrow beds, on an inclined plane, so that we have to manœuvre almost all night to keep ourselves from rolling out. But our greatest annoyance is the food loaded with sauce and grease; meagre meat, without nourishment; fowls like pigeons: we had some yesterday, with a sort of custard sauce. I really believe our health suffers from want of good, substantial, plain diet. I give orders myself for mutton chops, without butter, gravy, sauce, pepper, &c.; they bring up veal cutlets as hard as a board, and covered with onions and Cayenne. Those who travel for their health, would do well to remember how large a deduction must be made on the score of change of food. We should have done infinitely better, if, instead of our Swiss maid, we had brought one of our English servants with us, who understood something of our mode of living at home. At Franckfort, however, we really met with excellent meat. We hope soon now to be at Bern, fixed for a time; and then my first care will be to get good food for my dear family, who are really wonderfully well, considering we have now come seven hundred and eleven miles, and travelled near six weeks. The roads are very smooth, and without pavé.

*Hoellenthal, or the Infernal Valley, between Frey-*

*burg and Neustadt, Thursday night, July 24.*—We set off this morning, from Emmendingen, and came eight miles to Freyburg, a town of eleven thousand souls, on the entrance of the Black Forest. We were much delighted with the cathedral, which, though smaller than that of Strasburg, is more beautiful. The open-work of the tower is really surprising; I observed, as we mounted its five hundred and thirteen steps, that five open spaces in the walls occurred for every closed part; the tower being supported by these closed parts, and the stone staircase which runs up within it. It is just as if the Monument in London were built, not with closed walls, but with five-sixths of them in open-work; it really is quite incredible. After dining, at half-past twelve, we came, in five hours, fifteen miles, to this valley, from which I am writing.

I was not prepared to expect any thing beyond a common drive; but the extraordinary magnificence of the scenery was such as to dispute with the finest parts of the Rhine. For ten or twelve miles the road followed the windings of a lovely stream, the Treisam, through a valley adorned on each side with craggy mountains of stupendous height; on the sides of which, the hanging woods of dark fir were beyond measure grand and sublime. The views on the Rhine had indeed more of softness joined with grandeur—the noble river and vineyards were peculiar to them—but the scenes to-day had something more of wild and rude nature in her most majestic forms. Our hotel to-night is a deduction from the varied pleasures of the day; we are crowded into a close, low, miserable bed-room, where we had to eat our supper. For a tea-urn we had a common open sauce-pan and ladle; in fact, the inn is the end of a large building like a barn, and the rooms are so low, we can hardly stand upright in them; all is a contrast to the beautiful scene stretched before our view by the hand of Nature.

The houses here are curious: a large roof stretches beyond the walls, on all hands, ten or twelve feet; under this projecting roof a gallery runs along on the outside of the first story, and sometimes a second gallery at the second story. The rooms are so allotted, as to provide stable, wood-house, carpenter's shop, &c. &c. under the same roof. The houses are entirely of wood, which exudes a gum with which they are stained; the galleries are for entrance when the winter snow blocks up the ground floor. The women now begin to appear in stockings, but these are of a deep red; they have no gowns, but their under-dress is turned up like a pudding-sleeve gown, short round the arm; they wear large hats of an immense circumference, with the rims stretched out in an immovable circle. All is German still; so that I can obtain little moral or religious information. We had our coachman up into the chamber this afternoon, as our interpreter. It was impossible to do without him.

*Friday morning.*—Our meeting this morning at breakfast was most curious. My friend reported that he had been thrust into a miserable hole of a room, into which people were continually entering—his bed intolerable—scarcely any sleep. My boys were almost suffocated, and had little rest. Ann and I had beds with double inclined

planes and ridges. Eliza's account was the most satisfactory; she did not know how she passed the night, for she had not awoken once. In the mean time, the servant girls were clearing out the boys' room, to get the breakfast ready for us.—We started between seven and eight, and came eight miles to Neustadt, where I am now writing, a small town on the Black Forest. A tremendous hill, called Hoellensteig, or the Infernal Hill, led to a more open country, on the bosom of which cottages were sprinkled, with here and there a chapel entirely of wood, about four yards square; we entered one—the cross, an altar, and rude offerings, were within. We soon passed one or two comfortable hotels. We ought to have pressed on to one of them last night, and not to have implicitly followed the advice of our voiturier, who has full as much regard for his horses as for us.—In fact, with a large party like ours, and two carriages, it would be far better to divide, when we have to spend the night in small villages, than to crowd into one miserable inn.

This Black Forest covers fifty leagues of country; it was the cradle of those formidable Germans who annihilated the Roman Empire. Sixteen thousand souls live in it, in insulated cabins; these cabins have long roofs covering the galleries, and reaching down to the earth behind the dwelling-house; the barn is over the house; the whole is built of beams crossed and tied together, without bricklayer's work; and the ceilings of the rooms are wainscot, and they use slips of fir for candles: they trade in wood-work, which finds its way even to America.

*Donaueschingen, 21 miles from Hoellensteig, 13 from Neustadt, Friday night.*—This is a small town, consisting of two thousand souls, at the extremity of the Duchy of Baden. It is beautifully situated on elevated ground. Near to it rises the Danube, the noblest river in Europe, which washes in its course fifteen hundred miles of the territories of Bavaria, Austria, and Hungary, till it empties itself in the Black Sea. Some of its springs are in the court-yard of the Château, in an enclosed basin of thirty feet square; whence a rivulet flows, which joins the Brigach and the Breg (two far more considerable streams,) and is called the Danube. We jumped over it with ease.—From what obscure causes do the mightiest effects flow! A river celebrated throughout the world, and rolling by some of the noblest cities, is here feeble and inconsiderable! It is thus the current of evil from a single individual, small at first, sometimes swells as it flows, till distant regions are desolated with its waves. The sources of the wisest blessings to mankind have also their first rise in small and unnoticed beginnings. Nay, the first bursting forth of that "well of water which springeth up into everlasting life" is small and inconsiderable. No wise man undervalues the beginnings of things.

We have now pursued the Rhine three hundred and fifty miles in its majestic and fruitful course, and have visited the Danube in its first feeble and unperceived struggles. Thus the two noblest and most celebrated rivers in Europe are associated in our minds in their origin or their progress, and will be connected with the numerous events of ancient and modern history, which our



reading may furnish. It is a pleasing and instructive part of foreign travel, to visit the scenes familiar to us from our earliest reading. It furnishes fresh materials of thought. It gives a life and locality, as it were, to our knowledge. It embodies and realizes history.

We have now left the Black Forest, the mountains, the cabins, and all the magical scene. Our inn to-night is excellent. Mr. Canning was here two years ago; and our host seemed never satisfied in telling us of the dignity of his manner, the acuteness of his questions, and, above all, the correctness of his French—in which, however, our informer was no great proficient himself. Our friend slept in the room which this distinguished statesman occupied. Adieu.

*Schaffhausen, 778 miles from Calais, Saturday evening, July 26.*—Thank God we have entered SWITZERLAND, in health and peace! The road from Donaueschingen, twenty-two miles, is extremely beautiful; rich valleys crowned with verdure, mountains rising in noble boldness on each side, the road winding with continual change of scenery, brought us to the first of the Swiss cantons. As we passed beyond the Baden frontier, the improvement in agriculture, and general appearance of the villages, was striking. Hedges, well-cultivated fields, neat farms, met our eyes for the first time since we left England; every spot of land is now employed to the best purpose, and with neatness and cleverness.

As we entered this land of freedom, the associations awakened in our minds were most pleasing. An inconsiderable country—rude and barren—apparently doomed to bondage and obscurity—has raised itself by valor and conduct to be the admiration of the world. It preceded England by two or three centuries in the march of liberty; and, except during the twenty years of the French domination, has been acquiring for more than five hundred years an almost unparalleled measure of national glory—from education, industry, commerce, a free government, public spirit, virtue, and, since the Reformation, from the light of pure Christianity. There is something so noble in all this, that it fills the imagination, and imparts an additional charm to the natural beauties of the country itself.

Schaffhausen contains about seven thousand souls. Many of the fronts of the houses are covered from the top to the bottom with the devices which I have before mentioned. Several statues of Swiss heroes adorn the public places. The son of the principal innkeeper talks very good English. He spent six months in England for the purpose of learning the language. He spoke to me with great feeling of the kindness of Dr. Steinkopf; and there evidently appeared to be a strong religious impression remaining on his mind, from what he had seen of the zeal of our societies for the propagation of the Gospel, and of the high tone of Christian doctrine and practice in our happy country. We have an introduction to a professor of theology here, who is an example of primitive kindness.

Soon after our arrival, we took a cabriolet, and drove three miles, to see the celebrated fall of the Rhine. The road leading to it is exquisite; vineyards stretch over all the sides of the mountains, and the country is open and variegated. The

road leads along by the Rhine, which is here of a deep green color. I am not sure if I was not a little disappointed at the first coup-d'œil of the fall itself. My imagination had been heated by descriptions, and I thought the descent would have been greater. But as soon as I had time to recover myself, and recollect how much the width of the river took away from the apparent depth of the fall, I was better prepared to view the wonderful sight. It is truly astonishing.

A multitude of rocks first impede the flow of the river; through these it makes its way, till, having overcome them all, it rushes down about eighty feet, with an impetuosity, a rage, a boiling foam, which literally darken the air, and create a constant mist and shower. The body of water which falls, and the fury, the incredible fury, of the descent, make this a wonder of nature. The thunder of the cataract is so loud, that it absolutely drowns the voice—you cannot hear yourself speak. Immediately above the fall, four immense, ragged, overhanging rocks stretch at considerable intervals quite across the flood. These divide the torrent for a moment into five parts, without lessening its fury. Ages back they doubtless formed a complete barrier which the stream had to surmount, and which made the depth of the fall double what it is at present.

Many falls in Switzerland are more picturesque, but none so terribly majestic as this. It impresses quite an awful conviction of the power of God, and how soon all nature would be dissolved, if he were to permit. We observed the fall, first from a gallery overhanging the side of it, and watered with its dashing stream; then in a boat from the middle of the river; next, from a window of a house on the opposite side; lastly, from a summer-house commanding the height of the river just before its fall. We had likewise the pleasure of seeing it in a camera obscura. It added greatly to the delight of this excursion, that my dear Mrs. W. was well enough to accompany us; indeed, the real beauties of our tour have lain open to her inspection as much as if she had been ever so strong. It is chiefly the interior of buildings, which she has been unable to visit.

*Sunday, July 27.*—"My soul is athirst for God, yea, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the presence of God?" says the inspired Psalmist; and such would I wish to be my feelings on this my sixth silent Sunday. I have been to the Protestant German service, (all the canton is Protestant;) a venerable clergyman, seventy or eighty years of age, preached. I would have given any thing to have understood him; his manner was so earnest, so impressive, so affectionate, so impassioned; his voice majestic, and yet sweet. The service began with singing, (which was vociferation rather than singing;) then a prayer by the minister, who came from the gallery into a sort of tribune opening from it; after this a sermon and prayer; singing concluded. The service began at eight in the morning. Several persons in the congregation sat with their hats on. During the sermon, two officers were going round collecting money, in bags hung at the end of long poles. There was a large congregation, and all seemed very attentive. After breakfast we had our English liturgy, and a ser-

mon. At twelve, we went to the catechising at the cathedral; it was very pleasing to see one or two hundred children seated in order, whilst a minister heard them a portion of the Heidelberg Catechism, one of the most excellent of all the Protestant formularies. After the children had answered, the minister began to put questions to one of them; and then, apparently, to explain the portion to the whole body of children—I was delighted—this is the reasonable, intelligent worship of God; but it is late, and I must wish you adieu for to-night.

I am yours affectionately,

D. W.

#### LETTER VI.

*Zurich, July 18.—Basle, August 1, 1823.*

Bridge—Swiss customs—State of Religion—Professor—Fall of Rhine—Eglisau—First view of Alps—Zurich—Reformers—Inn L'Epee—Antistes Hess—Mr. Wilberforce—Zuingle—Documents of Reformation—Clergy—Bible Society—Lavater's Forgiveness of his Murderer—Aarau—Good done by an English Clergyman—Basle—M. Blumhardt—Stoves—Fountains—A Divine—Tombs of Erasmus and Ecolampadius—Holy Alliance—Council of Basle—Likeness of Erasmus.

*ZURICH, Monday evening, July 28, 1823.*

MY DEAR SISTER—Before I quit the subject of Schaffhausen, I must tell you, that this morning we examined a curious model of the bridge over the Rhine here, burnt by the French in 1799. It was built by a common carpenter, with only one pier, over a space of three hundred and sixty-four feet, all of wood; the pathway being suspended under, not placed over, the arches, so that it quivered with the slightest movement of a passenger. I may as well mention also, a few other things which struck us by their novelty during our stay there. We observed a funeral, where the procession consisted of several hundred persons; every friend of a deceased person attending in a mourning robe. The churches, though noble, majestic buildings, are absolutely devoid of ornament, having been stripped to the bare walls. There was a nakedness about them which offended the eye. I prefer the wisdom and moderation of our English Reformers in this, as well as other respects; but the Protestants here are of the Calvinistic, not Lutheran, persuasion. The Catholic pilgrims who visit Einsiedeln and other celebrated places of pilgrimage, walk hand in hand, with bouquets in their hats, singing as they pass the streets: on Saturday thirty-two passed in this way through the town. The Swiss keep unusually good time; beginning the day in summer at three, dining at twelve, and shutting up their shops at seven; and their clocks happen now to be an hour and ten minutes faster than those at Paris. Every youth who chooses may become a soldier to defend the state. We saw a number of little lads exercising this morning. So far as to the customs of the place.

Its moral and religious state I endeavored to ascertain from the professor. The Protestant cantons are very strict and firm in their peculi-

arities, more so than I have hitherto observed in other parts. There are thirty or forty clergy in the small canton of Schaffhausen. The attention paid to the catechising of the children, and the preparing them for the Holy Communion, is excellent. We might learn much from the Swiss on this subject. All the children of the canton are obliged to attend and learn their catechism; and there are ministers especially appointed for their instructors. They seem to have no idea of leaving the young, as we too much do in England, in ignorance of the principles of Christianity. Religious education is, in their view, the very first duty they owe their children; and the only foundation of a tranquil, well-ordered, virtuous community. The laws are strict, and the magistrates also exercise a salutary influence over public morals; but I doubt whether spiritual religion, with its holy fruits, is now actually flourishing. The Sacraments are, however, well attended. In a town of seven thousand souls, there are four or five hundred communicants, at two or three churches (perhaps one thousand five hundred or two thousand in all,) communicating once or twice a year. Still I fear that all this is too much of a mere form, and that the chilling theology of Germany has infected the canton. May God raise up a new spirit of faith and love among them!

I did all I could to make the professor understand our views of religion in England; and to encourage him in openly following the doctrines of the Reformation, as the only hope of a revival of true Christianity. It is a delightful thing to be able in any measure to strengthen the hands of a brother in the Gospel. I can do but little; but what I can do, I feel bound not to omit. He spoke to me about the *Règlement* at Geneva. He expressed himself with great reserve, but evidently regretted that measure. He was very curious to know something about our English universities, and the plan of literary and religious education in them. I satisfied his inquiries, and really felt gratified that I should happen to have about me a list of the officers and heads of colleges in Oxford and Cambridge to present to him. You cannot imagine with what pleasure he received it.

We left Schaffhausen at eight this morning, for Zurich, twenty-five miles. On our road, we stopped again at the fall of the Rhine, and once more admired its unequalled terrors. The Rhine is a continued flood—a torrent, from the dissolved snows, where it springs, till it loses itself in Holland, after a course of seven hundred miles—so that a vessel, when first going down the stream from Switzerland, shoots like an arrow. The width of the fall is four hundred and fifty feet, the least depth sixty feet, the greatest eighty. It differs from the Niagara in two respects; in volume of water it is inferior; in majesty it surpasses it. The Niagara is two thousand seven hundred feet wide, and one hundred and fifty-six feet high; but it merely turns suddenly down the fall in a continued stream, as from a lock; whereas the Rhine, with unparalleled fury, dashes from rock to rock, till the spray and foam obscure view.

At Eglisau, a lovely village on our way,



we dined, we saw, for the first time, a covered bridge, erected in 1811, over the Rhine (the French having burnt the former one;) you walk over under rafters and beams, windows on each side opening upon the river. It is entirely covered at the top with a roof, and enclosed on the sides, so that you are, as it were, in a house; whilst the rafters, &c. make you think it is the roof of a country church. These covered bridges abound in Switzerland.

As we approached Zurich, we caught a first view of the distant Alps, about Zug and Schwitz. The hills first in view were shaded by the afternoon sun; over these, brilliant volumes of clouds were discernible; and from amidst the clouds, the peaks of the Alps were easily distinguished by their defined outlines, sharp summits, and the bright whiteness of the eternal snows with which they are covered. We entered Zurich, the capital of the canton, about five o'clock. I could not but be sensibly affected. This is the first town in Switzerland that separated from the church of Rome three centuries back—it was the favorite asylum of our English Reformers during the vacillating and tyrannical reign of Henry the Eighth, and the bloody persecution of queen Mary. It is supposed to have been the place where our great Crammer, soon after he had been raised to the primacy, caused the first complete edition of the English Bible, Miles Coverdale's, to be printed, in the year 1535.\* The town contains eleven thousand souls; the canton one hundred and eighty-three thousand; nearly all Protestant. It is amongst the most thickly peopled tracks of the continent of Europe; which is owing chiefly to the long-continued enjoyment of good government, and to consequent habits of virtuous industry.

The beauty of the country accords with its reputation. We are at the inn called L'Epée. Imagine a room fifty feet by thirty, of which two sides are a continued window, overhanging the broad deep-blue torrent of the Limmat, which, rushing like an arrow from the lake of Zurich, seems hurrying to pour itself into the Rhine. The old wooden bridge which leads across it is immediately before me, and is wide enough for the market, which is just now in amusing confusion, and presents a most characteristic scene of Swiss costume and manners. The noble churches, quays, and public buildings on the other side of the river diversify the prospect. In the distance on my right a second bridge appears, with a tower built in the midst of the torrent for state-prisoners—whilst still further on, my eye is lost in following the beautiful lake itself, till I discern at length the Alps rearing their majestic heads beyond it in the utmost horizon.—Such is the room where I am writing this letter; I suppose it is one of the most beautiful in the world. It is curious, that in order to reach this splendid chamber you have to

defile through stables, voitures, horsemen, voituriers, ostlers, post-boys, and smells of all kinds, by a dark, narrow passage; for the entire ground floors of the Swiss inns are occupied by this sort of miseries; partly, I suppose, on account of the frequent inundations from melted snow, or overflowing rivers.

Last night we ascended a bastion, near the town, and beheld the magnificent scene of the range of Alps illuminated, or rather gilded, by the setting sun; it was, really, as if all the snows were suddenly set on a blaze, the fiery meteor was so bright and so extensive. As the sun further declined, the magic scene lost its enchantment. It is singular, that this is the first night this summer that the Alps have been thus visible. My friend travelled four years ago in Switzerland, and never saw any thing like it. Indeed, we have been favored all our journey. The weather has been unusually cool, with the exception of a day or two, and we are all now in comfortable health. May we have the additional blessing of a thankful, humble, holy, teachable heart, to see God in every thing, to love God because of every thing, and to be led up towards him by every thing! I should just mention, that on our road to Zurich we crossed a part of Baden, when the same appearance of negligence and misery returned which I before noticed. As soon as we regained the Swiss territory, all was again neat, convenient, industrious, and happy: such is the difference between the effects of civil and religious freedom, and of an arbitrary government.

*Zurich, Tuesday, July 29.*—I have been introduced, to-day, to the celebrated Antistes Hess; he is eighty-two years old, a venerable, pious, holy man, on the verge of heaven; with a heart full of love to the Saviour, and to the souls of men. I took my three children to him, that he might bless them. The Antistes spoke to me much of Mr. Wilberforce, whose book he had read with delight: he begged me to convey to him his Christian regards: it was delightful to me to see this aged disciple. He is one of the persons whom I was most anxious to know. You are perhaps aware, that Antistes is a Latin word, meaning nearly the same as President. It is a title often given in ecclesiastical writers to bishops, though sometimes to simple priests. In the Swiss Reformed churches, it is applied to the ecclesiastical head of a canton. The government of these churches, though not episcopal, differs considerably from what is called Presbyterianism. I met at the house of the Antistes, an aged magistrate of this place, who commended to me the cause of Switzerland, and begged of me again and again to represent to my countrymen the state of his canton; pressing on me that Switzerland had been the cradle of the Reformation.

We next visited, with much pleasure, the city library, abounding in original unpublished letters of our Reformers. The history of that interesting period, after all Burnet has done, might, undoubtedly, be much enriched from these stores. Such an undertaking would require great zeal, discretion, knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and, above all, a commanding and pious mind; but its success would be sure. We saw the three well-known Letters of Lady Jane Gray, written to Bullinger, in 1554.

\* The New Testament had first been published by Tyndale about 1526: the Pentateuch appeared in 1530; Miles Coverdale completed the arduous task under the auspices of Crammer, in 1535. This Bible is in a folio volume, printed in double columns, in what Mr. Dibdin terms, a *foreign secretary-gothic type*. It was executed, as it is generally thought, at the press of a Zurich printer.

The Epistles of St. Paul in Greek, transcribed entire in the hand of Zuinglius in 1517, just as he was first discerning the chief corruptions of the church of Rome, were most interesting to me, not only as an ancient manuscript, but as tracing the Reformation to its true source, a deep study of the New Testament.

Zuingle, amongst all the noble body of Reformers, seems to have been one of the most able and acute. He was born Jan. 1st, 1487. He soon began to discover the real force of the chief doctrines of Scripture. He not only copied out the text of St. Paul's Epistles, but also committed them all to memory, and earnestly sought by prayer the teaching of the Holy Spirit; comparing Scripture with Scripture, and explaining the obscure passages by the more clear. In 1581 he was elected by the chapter to the office of preacher; and on Jan. 1, 1519, he delivered his first discourse in the cathedral of Zurich before an immense auditory. His wisdom and penetration were so remarkable, and the influence which he acquired over the council and all the inhabitants of Zurich was so great, that he was soon able to carry the canton along with him in a firm but gradual profession of the evangelical doctrines. It is remarkable, that he had laboured his way out of most of the errors of Popery, and had attained to the light of Reformed truth in Zurich, at the very time that Luther, without design or concert with him, had been carrying on the same holy work in Germany.

The present pious and holy Antistes lives in the same house where this great Reformer dwelt; in the garden of which is a room literally filled with unpublished archives of the Reformation. The honor in which Zuingle is held here is remarkable. I observe, that God has often brought about the greatest works of mercy by a few distinguished individuals in a town or country, raised up by his Spirit, embued with the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and armed with zeal, fortitude, wisdom, and love; Zuingle at Zurich, Ecolampadius at Basle, Bucer at Strasburg, Calvin and Beza in France and Geneva, Luther and Melancthon in Germany, Cranmer and his noble associates in England. May men of a like spirit be raised up again! May divines and professors transcribe and study, like Zuingle, St. Paul's Epistles! Soon would Protestantism revive, and Popery fade away before it! It is known that our English Reformer, Ridley, committed to memory early in life, almost all St. Paul's Epistles, as well as the Catholic ones; the benefit derived from which he acknowledged with gratitude, just before his martyrdom.

In the afternoon we took a sail on the lake, delicious beyond description. The evening however, was not so favorable for viewing the setting sun, as last night. I am much grieved to say, that my impression of the present state of real religion in some parts of this canton is not so favorable as its former celebrity would lead one to expect—in one parish, St. Peter's, four or five hundred only attend at church, out of five thousand inhabitants, for forty-eight Sundays in the year; and two thousand five hundred for the four remaining Sundays, the sacrament days, which seem almost superstitiously revered—many of the clergy of Zurich meet the magistrates and gentlemen at a club, once a week, to smoke and talk politics; these

are not promising symptoms. I do not pretend, as a stranger, to judge. I take my account from the confession of one of the clergy, who told me these things without the slightest idea of their impropriety. I am quite distressed that Mr. Gessner, the son-in-law of Lavater, is not in Zurich. The superior talents and eminent piety of this excellent minister make me exceedingly regret that I am unable to see him. He forms a bright exception to the melancholy statement just given. I trust there are many others. O how different a thing is real spirituality of heart from the name of religion, whether Reformed or Catholic!

*Zurich, July 30, Wednesday.*—My dearest Ann accompanied me to-day to the benevolent and pious Antistes. His amiable and truly Christian temper appears in all he does and says. When he took leave of my wife, he presented her with one of his smaller works, and prayed that peace and grace might be with her, and that her sons and her daughter might be her comfort and support. He then added, "We shall never meet again in this world, but we shall meet in another, to be with Jesus: that is our proper country; there is peace, holiness, and joy." The institution for the blind in this city, and that for orphans, much interested us. It was affecting to see the blind write, and do sums in arithmetic by letters and figures impressed on the paper with an iron pen; so that they knew them by the touch. The singing of the orphan children was very beautiful. I called on the bookseller of the Bible Society; that noble institution, though less flourishing now, has accomplished much good, considering the limited resources of a single canton. We visited the arsenal, and several other objects of curiosity. The people marry very young in Zurich, and are betrothed yet earlier. The taxes are light: their largest bookseller pays four Napoleons a year (about 3*l.* 3*s.*) for every thing.\*

The tomb of Lavater in St. Peter's church much affected me; he was wounded by the hand of a common soldier during Massena's invasion in 1790, and died after fifteen months of extreme suffering. His benevolence and tenderness of heart had been remarkable amidst all the eccentricities of his opinions through life; and they appeared conspicuously on this trying occasion. He not only did all in his power to prevent the criminal from being discovered; but left him at his death the following affecting testimony of his forgiveness: "Memorandum to be given after my death, with an affectionate letter, if it be possible, to the grenadier (D'Elsass, as I think), who shot at me, Sept. 26, 1799—but care must be taken that his name be concealed. May God pardon thee, as I from my heart pardon thee! O, may you never suffer what I suffer through you! I embrace you, my friend; you have done me a kindness without knowing it. If you see these lines, may they be a seal to you of the grace of

\* There are several print-sellers here who have most extensive and beautiful collections of Swiss engravings. I bought what are called the One Hundred Views, and also the Fifty Views. I gave thirty or forty shillings for the two sets. I may, as well add, that the duty on colored prints at Dover is reduced from two shillings each to two pence.



the Lord, who forgives penitent sinners ; who delivers them, and makes them happy ! May God enable me earnestly to pray for you, so that I may never doubt that we shall one day embrace each other before the presence of the Lord !"—Surely this paper breathes something of the spirit of the martyr Stephen. The murderer is said to have previously received favors from Lavater.

*Aarau, Thursday night, July 31.*—We left Zurich with regret this morning, and came twenty-eight miles to this town, the capital of the canton of Argovie. It has three thousand inhabitants, chiefly reformed. It stands pleasantly on a hill on the Aar river, the two banks of which are united by a covered bridge. We were surprised to find that the same church is used here for Catholics and Protestants : we entered it ; there were no superstitious ornaments. The Protestants meet at eight, the Catholics at half-past nine, on the Sunday. We dined at Baden, where there is a most beautiful village on the banks of the Limmat. At the table-d'hôte I met two strangers from Basle. After a good deal of conversation, the lady turned out to be a friend of an English clergyman of my acquaintance, and begged me most earnestly to remember her to him, and to assure him that she had not forgotten his advice, but read every Sunday one of the sermons he gave her : it was delightful to me thus to trace some fruit of the advice given by my dear friend. What good might not be effected, if English travellers were studious to lose no opportunity of honoring God their Saviour, on the occasions, however slight, which continually present themselves. An impression may often be left on the mind of a foreigner by a kind and appropriate remark, which nothing can efface. An Englishman has peculiar advantages for this, from the weight attached to his country all over the Continent.

*Basle, 26 miles from Aarau, Friday evening, August 1.*—We have had a charming ride to-day ; the road from Aarau to Stein (a lovely village on the Rhine) lay through a noble picturesque country. Some of the villages were more characteristic than any we have yet seen. From Stein the road ran by the Rhine ; and when we had come within nine miles of Basle, we sent on the carriages and came down, or rather were flooded down, the Rhine, in a boat ; the stream carried us the nine miles in an hour and a quarter—a rather hazardous voyage, as our friends at Basle told us. Basle is a very ancient city, situated at the angle where the Rhine turns northward for Germany. It contains sixteen thousand souls, almost all Protestants. The same liberty prevails here as at Zurich, the same habits. Bread is three half-pence the pound—meat, two-pence three farthings the pound—wages, two shillings a day. There are eight churches. Mr. Blumhardt, of the Missionary Institution, called upon me this morning—a most devout, delightful man. How refreshing to the mind, to meet with a Christian brother in a foreign land, whom one can understand : for Mr. B. speaks French and English well.

Travelling from canton to canton, it is curious to see the changes in the villages—some Popish, some Protestant : the latter are always the more

comfortable, neat, industrious ; but they all seem to live together in peace ; and a reasonable liberty appears equally dear to all. The dress of the women varies in each canton : the hair of the Zurich women is neatly combed and parted : they have no gowns, but their underdress expands over the shoulders, something like a surplice ; they have a stomacher of cloth, with braids of scarlet crosswise ; they seem of a strong, fine race, compared with the French and German women.

At Aarau, yesterday, we observed the houses, all along the main streets, with jutting roofs, only not shelving to the ground ; each house has its own roof advancing perhaps ten or twelve feet ; so that we walked under them during the rain quite defended ; the roofs differ in height, shape, color, &c. so as to make a most singular appearance. I believe I have not mentioned the German and Swiss stoves, with which almost every room is furnished ; these are sometimes of iron, of a moderate size ; but oftener of tiles, stone, or Chinaware, and then they are eight or ten feet square, standing on thick legs, which raise them a few inches from the ground, and reaching in a turret form to the ceiling. The fire is placed in them from the passage, through an opening in the partition-wall of the room : there is no grate nor flame seen, but the warmth is produced by the whole mass of the tower being thoroughly heated ; the China stoves are of green, blue, or yellow.—The fountains also in this country are curious objects ; every town and village, however small, has its fountain. The Catholic adorns his with saints, the Protestant with heroes : there is no such thing as water conducted to each house, as with us ; all depends on the fountains, which are commonly large stone enclosures, from twenty to fifty feet round, with two, four, or six jets d'eau, which fall so as to meet conveniently the tubes, &c. placed on the margin of the basin. Around these basins are collected women, washing garden-stuff or clothes, horses drinking, servants extending jugs, &c. At Stein we were at the singular hotel, looking full on the Rhine, of which M. Simond speaks in his *Voyage* with warm commendation. We showed the landlord the book in which mention is made of him : he was not a little astonished that his solitary house should be thus celebrated.

Perhaps one of the most singular persons we have seen since we have been abroad, was a Protestant clergyman of one of the towns we have lately passed through ; pompous, good-tempered, officious, confused ; with a mixture of pride from his station and family, and of familiarity from an affected condescension towards others ; the high priest, and yet the friendly, kind, obliging man ; tedious withal ; dawdling, never seeing the good sense of a thing, and having no tact in discovering the inconveniences which his conduct occasions ; a worthy, bustling, unintelligible personage. But all this would have been nothing, if it were not that this same person is a divine, nay, the divine, the great man in theology, whose reputation spreads through the neighborhood, who talks perpetually of the Reformation, and whose opinions gain credence. I really was quite nervous in his company : after many trials I could get no one good sentiment out of him ; he did nothing but talk to me of his church, his parish, his house, and

four or five portraits of himself. A negative character is not enough for a clergyman in a dying, guilty world. The minister of Jesus Christ has a high message to deliver, a weighty stewardship to discharge, a solemn trust to guard. He has to teach by his doctrine and his conversation. He is not to sink down to the standard of the world, but to rouse that world from its torpor, and awaken it to the unseen interests of the soul and eternity.

*Basle, Saturday evening, August 2.*—The cathedral here interested us greatly this morning. It is one of the noblest Protestant churches of the Continent. It is built of a fine red stone; simple, yet majestic in its ornaments, with numerous aisles and monuments, and a remarkably curious cloister. The tombs of Erasmus, and of Ecolampadius, the Basle Reformer, much delighted us. The town is neat, and seemingly full of business. The public library contains thirty-two thousand volumes, and manuscript letters of most of the Reformers. In the afternoon we spent two or three hours with the excellent Mr. B. The first Foreign Bible Society was formed here in 1804, the very year when the original institution began in London. At the third centenary of the Reformation, New Testaments were given from the altar of the cathedral to all the children of the town—above two thousand were distributed. What an appropriate gift! The missionary institution contains thirty-four students, and is about to be enlarged. The lecture rooms and chambers are simple and unadorned.

The state of true religion is, on the whole, improving in Switzerland and some parts of Germany. Truth, holiness, and unity increase, hundreds of Catholics receive Bibles and attend Protestant churches. The Lutherans and Reformed have begun to unite in the common term evangelical. The Antistes and most of the clergy preach and live according to the Gospel. On the other hand, the court of Rome threatens, the Pope is aroused; he thinks the Protestants have begun to propagate their views by Bible and missionary institutions; and he is determined to oppose them. The Jesuits are the Pope's household troops; they are spreading every where, and resisting, in the most open manner, every attempt at Scriptural education. The holy alliance is thought to favor the Pope and the Jesuits, by acting on the idea that *all societies* are dangerous.\* In the mean time, the friends of the truth are active and humble, leaving events with God. Mr. B. was exceedingly struck with London when he visited it for the first time last year. He says it took him six months, on his return, to cool and collect his scattered and astonished ideas, and

digest what he had observed. He thinks Paris is only a village compared with London. He complained, however, of London fogs, London water, and London cookery—the fine mountain air, the Rhine, and the ordinary food of Switzerland; these are what he wanted to complete his happiness—he scarcely once saw the sun the first six weeks he was in London. But he forgot all this in the intellectual and religious festivals in which he participated.

I omitted to say, that we saw at the cathedral to-day the very hall where the council of 1431–47 held its sittings; the self-same seats and other furniture remain. That council was convoked to prevent the Reformation; but the scandal raised by the vices of the bishops, who composed it, had the effect of convincing men of its necessity, and of hastening its approach. It happened curiously, that on the very benches where the Pope's legate and the other members of the council sat four centuries back, the trophies of the Reformation were placed, which had just been displayed at the celebration of the third centenary of that great event.

Yours affectionately,

D. W.

P. S. Before I shut up my letter, I must add, that, in the old divinity school of the cathedral, we saw a likeness of the celebrated Erasmus, scratched apparently by an idle student with the rough point of an iron nail, on the common wooden desk which was before him, during lecture. Three centuries have rendered this roguish trick a great curiosity. The lines are beginning to be faint; but the likeness is still strong. You will please however to observe, that Erasmus is not one of my prime favorites. He had talents, wit, and learning in abundance; but he wanted the heart of a Reformer. The important aid which he at first rendered to Luther, was more than neutralized by the bitter opposition to the Gospel, in which he at length openly joined.

## LETTER VII.

*Moutiers, August 4.—Bern, August 11, 1823.*

Sunday at Basle—View from table-d'hôte Room—Valley of Moutiers—Anabaptists—Soyhier—Court—Cormoret—Rock Pierre Pertuis—Observations on Swiss Government—Neufchâtel—Reformer Farel—Bienne—Island of St. Pierre—J. J. Rousseau—Seedorf—Bern—Voiturier—M. Wyttenbach—The great Haller—Swiss Diet—Sunday at Bern—Pastor Henhofer.

*Basle, about 963 miles from London,  
Sunday, August 3, 1823.*

MY DEAREST SISTER—We are now closing our seventh absent Sunday; and have, for the first time, met with French service. We attended twice; at nine o'clock and at three. I endeavored to hear the sermons with that candor and sincere desire to derive instruction and comfort, which become a Christian, and especially a foreigner; but really they were

\* I find from friends who have returned from Rome since the publication of the second edition of this work, that nothing can exceed the present boldness of the Catholic hierarchy there—except their folly. Open claims of infallibility are made, indulgences placarded, the Bible and education spurned, the certain perdition of heretics avowed, the authority of human traditions asserted and vindicated as strongly as ever. In short, all the comparative mildness of Pius VII. and Gonsalvi is forgotten, and a new reign of intolerance commenced.—The Jesuits direct every thing.



so indifferent, or rather so unscriptural, that I was grieved at my very heart. Man is the same every where. It is not a mere freedom from superstition and infidelity which is enough. It is spiritual life which is wanting—that sensibility and perception which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and without which a moral death pervades all the powers of the soul—no due sense of sin, no real penitence, no faith in Christ for justification, no holy love, no communion with God, no dedication to his service, no separation from the world, no true obedience. I hope the strong impression I receive abroad of the necessity of the Gospel in its simplicity, will never be effaced from my mind. What is Protestantism, without the truth on which it rests, and the Holy Spirit by whom alone that truth can be taught or blessed? I cannot but mourn over the decay and desolations of the Protestant churches, as I pass from place to place. At Basle it is the French churches of which I speak; for the German here, thank God, are prosperous. The sixteen Lutheran ministers, with scarcely an exception, truly preach the Gospel. The Sabbath, therefore, generally, is much better observed than in Germany; the shops shut; no amusements; great order and decency.

*Monday morning, August 4.*—Basle was celebrated in the fourth century; it is capable of containing a hundred thousand inhabitants, but it has now only sixteen thousand. It is superbly situated on the Rhine, which here becomes navigable. The larger houses in the town have the front doors made of open wire-work, so as to admit the air. Many of the inhabitants have a swollen neck; arising, as Mr. B. informs us, from the nature of the water; but, as others think, from the moist, foggy atmosphere. In the Valais, this disease becomes a protuberance, and is often accompanied with idiocy. On the whole, Basle much delights us. The table-d'hôte room overhangs the Rhine; with the noble bridge over it, connecting great and little Basle, on our right, full in view. The prospect from one of the bastions surprised us quite unexpectedly one evening, as we were walking on the fortifications. At a sudden turn of the path, the most picturesque view burst upon us as by magic—The Rhine—the bridge—a part of the town—the tower of an old church—a beautiful well-wooded country—a thousand various objects interspersed—the whole exquisite. It is, in short, the simplicity, industry, piety, and happiness of the people, together with the liberty of their country, and its uncommon magnificence and beauty, which endear it to Englishmen. Switzerland is the land of moral and intellectual freedom, and one of the chief glories of Reformed Europe.

*Court, between Basle and Neufchatel, Monday night, August 4.*—We have come to-day thirty-two miles. This is the third time I have been surprised with a richness of scenery wholly unexpected. Nothing is so difficult to describe. Language—at least my language—is unable to follow the inexhaustible variety and profusion of beauties in Switzerland. For nine hours to-day our attention and admiration were excited so perpetually, that we were fatigued under the continued effort. It was not the Rhine, it was not the Hoellenthal,—the former, with its majestic flood and

exuberant vines, is unequalled in its way, the latter in wild and awful scenery appeared to us at the time incomparable—but the valley of Moutiers, where we now are, is of so new and grand a character, so considerable in extent (twenty-two miles), so varied at every turn throughout its course, that, though different from all the preceding scenery, we must allow it to be one of the very finest things we have yet seen. We are indebted to our good friend who has travelled in Switzerland before, for the excellent choice of our road on this and other occasions. Few Englishmen ever think of Hoellenthal, or the valley of Moutiers. If a traveller has not time to study well the best books before he leaves home, he should by all means obtain the company of a friend who has a thorough knowledge of the country, and judgment and taste to direct his attention to the most deserving objects. Otherwise he will infallibly lose some of the most interesting points.

The valley of Moutiers is a sort of fissure or chasm in the immense chain of the Jura mountains. The river Birse flows through it in a rather small, but clear, impetuous, and diversified stream; its numerous cascades, its various bridges, and endless windings, create an inexhaustible fund of pleasure. The rocks of immense height—vertical—parallel—answering to each other on the opposite sides of the chasm, sometimes like leaves of a book, and bearing on every side smaller or larger trees, apparently without any superincumbent earth—vast ravines in these masses, down which the torrents at times roll—overhanging fragments, threatening, as it were, to fall every moment, together with the sinuosities of the valley, formed a scene of wonder and delight. The foliage also, now of dark fir, now of lighter underwood; at one time filling up the valley, and hiding the bursting river; at other times rising up the mountains; and almost always spreading out on the rent masses of granite, added continued beauties,—whilst the enormous bodies of rock here and there forced down by the winter tempests, or loosened by the thaws and floods, almost closed the road, and blocked up the river. Along this valley the Romans formed a road, which, after having been more than once obstructed by the falling rocks, was opened again for the last time in 1752. The following inscription, in Latin, is engraved on a stone on the side of the road: “Joseph William, of Rincius, prince bishop of Balenstein Basiliensium, opened this road, which had been shut for a long time, by breaking through the rocks and opposing mountains, and casting bridges over the Birse, with a labour worthy of the Romans.” This boasting inscription, like too many others of the same class, is far from being true. The bishop took no other part in this enterprise, but that of claiming the honor of it. The inhabitants of the valley raised the money, and effected the laborious task.

The road now is excellent. We met as we drove along some venerable old men in great simplicity of attire, and with long flowing beards. They were part of the community of Anabaptists, who were banished from Berne in 1708, because they refused to take oaths and to bear arms. What an odious thing is persecution, especially in free states, and most of all where the

## TRAVELS ON THE CONTINENT.

Protestant religion is professed ! There are about 1000 of these good people here—industrious, meek, and religious—capable of being a blessing to any nation. They have no similarity of sentiment with the German Anabaptists of the sixteenth century.

I have been naturally led to reflect to-day on that awful disruption of the deluge, which was doubtless the origin of the amazing scenes through which we passed—the face of the creation bears marks of that signal judgment of Almighty God on a sinful world. I endeavored also to meditate on the goodness of God in furnishing man with sources of pleasure in the wonders of creation, and spreading over the wrecks of the world the sweet foliage and fertility, which are more delightful from these contrasts. When the last breaking up of nature shall come, and the rocks and mountains depart, may we inherit a new and brighter world wherein dwelleth righteousness !

The people now speak French. We are in the canton of Berne, containing two hundred and fifteen thousand souls, chiefly Protestants. We dined at Soyhier, a small Catholic village, where all the tombstones have cups or basins hanging by them, I suppose for holy water. In the corner of the churchyard is a small building filled with the bones of the dead, with an aperture or window, open to the air, by which you may see them, and touch them, if you please. The villages in this valley are curious, from the very low cottages of only one story, very wide, with roofs of wood, and large stones placed here and there upon the roof, to prevent its being blown away.

*Cormoret, Tuesday morning, eleven o'clock.*—We left Court this morning at seven, and came on here, sixteen miles, through a fine open country, bordered by mountains. At a place called Pierre Pertuis, we stopped to see the source of the Birse, whose stream had afforded us such extraordinary pleasure yesterday : it gushes from the side of a rock with such force as to turn three mills almost immediately. Above this source a lofty rock is pierced to admit the road : the opening, of about forty-five feet by fifteen, was known to the Romans, as an inscription cut in the rock,\* and almost obliterated by time, testifies. It is situated at the foot of the mountain Vion. We were overtaken by a most violent storm as we approached this village, Cormoret, and here discovered the advantage of Swiss architecture ; for the host of a small auberge no sooner saw us, than he opened the door of the barn, and we drove in under cover, first one carriage, then another ; a door in the side opened into the house, and stairs, steep as a ladder, conducted us to the *salle-à-manger*, or dining hall, over the said barn, where we now are. The ceiling, walls, floor, are all of the same

materials, unpainted wood. Our cold brought out, which we put into our tin boxes Basle. We have also Kirchinwasser (eau de cé-rise,) together with fresh eggs, warm milk, bread, all set out on an immense table, which surrounds three sides of the hall, and has no particular appearance of having been lately cleaned. In this style we are now about to dine, at half-past eleven, Swiss time.

*Twelve o'clock.*—As the storm continues, and we have finished our frugal meal, I will now go on with such remarks as occur to me. Switzerland formerly contained thirteen cantons, but at present twenty-two, confederated together by an act of congress, 1814 ; by which the actual limits and rights of the different states were as nearly as possible preserved. The Swiss date their freedom from the first efforts of the canton of Uri, Switz, and Unterwald, to throw off the Austrian yoke in 1308, under the heroic guidance of William Tell ; of whom I must tell you something, if possible, when we come to the scenes of his exploits. Though a republic, Switzerland has never, like Rome or Athens, formed one great community ; but has remained a confederacy of small states, managed by a general diet of deputies from each canton. It is by far the most mountainous country in Europe, having in fact only one large tract of level ground towards Basle, Zurich, and Bern. If you are travelling in some parts, you may eat on the same day the fruits of the coldest and of the warmest climates—the apple and pear, with the grape, almond, and fig. Switzerland contains one million seven hundred and fifty thousand souls, of whom above a million are Protestants. Basle is the largest city, Geneva the most populous, and Bern the most beautiful. The cantons differ from each other materially in religion and in form of government ; but a spirit of independence, activity, industry, pervades the whole, and makes them the freest and happiest country in Europe, after Great Britain.

*Neufchâtel, Wednesday morning, August 6.*—The storm clearing up yesterday, we set off at half-past one. We soon came to a hill very steep, but apparently moderate in length ; the two coachmen, with all our party, except Mrs. W. and Eliza, walked up. It turned out to be a genuine Swiss mountain, at least three miles long, and three thousand feet in height. We were more than an hour ascending, and as the boys and I followed a countryman by what he called a shorter route, we had the happiness to clamber up a side so precipitous, that we were obliged to cling to the roots of trees to prevent our falling backwards. At the top we saw a small auberge ; we entered it by the barn, and from that turned into the kitchen, where a moderate fire was burning, not on the hearth, but in the open raised sort of oven, which is usual in this country. We sat down to dry our feet whilst they prepared us some coffee ; happening to look up, we saw that the whole fire-place, ten feet by fifteen, gradually formed the chimney, which was all of wood, forty feet high, ending in a square at top, on which was a board raised on one side to allow the smoke to escape, by a pole which descended the whole length, and was hung

\* The inscription is as follows :

Numini Augusti  
torum  
Via facta per Titum  
Dummius Paternum  
II Virum Col. Helvet.

“To the divine Augustus, this road, made by Titus Dummius Paternus, Duovir of the colony of Helvetia, is dedicated.”



by words at the side of the oven. As we were sitting, the door opened, and in came our good friend, who had followed the main road, allured by the same hope of relief as ourselves. Eliza arrived soon after, and then Ann. We had a refreshing cup of coffee, in the *salle-à-manger*—which, by the bye, was all of wainscot, and with double windows; a defence against the winter storms; five months' snow falling most years.

We arrived at the capital of the canton of Neuchâtel at eight, after thirteen hours' journey, and forty-four miles. The weather was rainy in the afternoon; so that we could see little as we descended to the town, except the fine lake expanding its deep-blue waves on all sides. Had the weather been fine, the Alps would have crowned the horizon. We observed the villages had still the low cottages, with wooden shingles for tiles. The water-pipes were not placed against the houses, but led off about twenty feet, so as to carry off the water beyond the front gardens into the road. We noticed also extraordinary large dung-hills caked with much care, cut all around, apparently ten years old each, and placed in the garden precisely under the bed-room windows, I suppose, from the value attached to them by this frugal people. We had excellent beds after our fatigue last night, the best since we left England: my own chamber seems a sort of ball-room, thirty feet by twenty-five—these measures are, of course, in the way of conjecture; as all my remarks on Switzerland, in some degree, are. I am no professed traveller.

*Bienne, on the lake of the same name, Wednesday evening, August 6.*—We left Neuchâtel at eleven this morning, after seeing the cathedral, fountains, and vineyards—it has three thousand souls. The sepulchral stone of the Reformer Farel is in the church yard. The Alps, which on a fine day are seen stretching on the opposite side of the lake and bounding the view, we could not discern. We came on to Cerlier, twelve miles, to dinner; and then leaving the carriages, embarked in a boat on the lake of Bienne. We soon landed at the small island of St. Pierre, about a mile in circuit. It abounds in beautiful scenery. The single house on the island is an auberge, formerly a monastery, and of late years celebrated as the refuge of J. J. Rousseau for space of two months in 1765. The walls of his room are actually covered with inscriptions. A trap-door in the floor remains, by which he escaped from unwelcome visitors. A book for entering the names of strangers is kept. I was determined to accompany my signature with some token of disagreement from the sentiments of this pernicious writer. I therefore wrote, "D. W. qui, tout en admirant le génie de Rousseau, en déplore les erreurs, et les suites si funestes au Christianisme, et à la morale."

It is quite impossible that true religion should revive in France and Switzerland till the undiscerning encomiums of mere talent be superseded by a just and manly estimate of moral and intellectual excellency. Brilliancy of wit only augments the guilt of those who employ it to the corruption of mankind. In the case of Rousseau, not only do we see the finest powers of mind uncontrolled by religion, but positively left wild to the

impulses of vanity, selfishness, and impurity, without one redeeming quality. Yet men are intoxicated with the enthusiasm of his powers, utterly forgetful of the infinite mischiefs which he spent his whole life with a malicious diligence in scattering around him. The consequence of this sickly admiration of his genius is, that thousands of youth read his sophistical writings—catch hold of some specious objections to Christianity or to morals—allow their faith to be weakened or overthrown—take no pains to re-invigorate it by careful study and practical obedience to truth—insensibly commence infidels—and are lost at length in the vortex of sensuality and skepticism.

But to return. There are fine vineyards on the island, which are let to fifty families, who have half the grapes for their labor: last year, this little island, or rather a third part of it, yielded one hundred and sixty thousand bottles of wine; some years it yields only twenty-four thousand. Such is the uncertainty of the vintages in this country. We re-embarked, after a slight refreshment, and sailed to the town of Bienne. The wind was favorable, and the prospects on each side of the lake were charming; but the agitation of the vessel produced in some of us a qualmishness which interrupted our pleasure.

Bienne is a small town of two thousand five hundred souls, at the foot of Mount Jura. The fosse or moat of the fortifications is turned into gardens—a circumstance which we have often seen, and which always fills me with an indescribable pleasure. I remember as we drove out of Lille, it was delightful to me, after passing four or five lines of frightful fortifications, to turn my eye down and see a number of gardeners and hay-makers at their peaceful occupations at the bottom of the fosse. Bienne abounds with fountains; the stone figure of one of which represents a good and evil angel struggling for the soul of man: Satan has horns and an enormous tail. Over another is a Swiss patriot, immovable as the pedestal on which he stands. The gate-way has an extremely old bas-relief of two heroes, the peculiar undauntedness of whose countenances and attitudes bespeaks the Swiss bravery. The chief manufactory in this neighborhood is watches: a good workman can gain about eight francs a day, an ordinary one three or four. Bread is three halfpence a pound, meat threepence. Out of forty-nine thousand souls in the canton of Neuchâtel, there are only two prisoners now confined in jail, and these for robbery. The punishment of death is scarcely ever inflicted. We hope to be at Bern to-morrow, where letters from England await us; I cannot but feel anxious, after a total silence of nearly eight weeks, to hear of my beloved family, and beloved congregation; the duties also before me may materially vary in consequence: may God grant us all needful direction, and vouchsafe us the grace which sanctifies and saves!

*Bern, Friday morning, August 8.*—We arrived here yesterday afternoon, after a delightful journey of twenty-four miles from Bienne. We are now about nine hundred and eighty-seven miles from Calais, and one thousand and eighty-seven from London; and having reached what may be

called the capital of Switzerland, and our resting-place in this enchanting country (for Geneva, if we go much there, is but two or three days' journey), I would raise, if I may be allowed to make the allusion, my memorial, and call it "Ebenezer;" and say, "Hitherto hath God helped us:" we have travelled all this way without a single accident, properly speaking; and with only those variations in health which occasional heat and over-fatigue have brought on. The weather has been, on the whole, more favorable to us than it would have been during any other summer for several years. Here we intend first to wait, and entirely rest ourselves, and then form the best plan we can for our health, comfort, and instruction during our remaining tour. Thank God, I found letters from England at the post, with nothing but good news. I received six letters altogether.

We dined yesterday at Seedorf, a lovely village, commanding one of the finest views we have yet seen. The road from Bienne was almost one continued succession of mountains; which you will readily believe, when I tell you that Bern is situated one thousand seven hundred and eight feet above the level of the sea. It is indisputably the finest city we have seen, from the beauty of its site, from the nobleness and regularity of its main streets, from the fine white free-stone of which it is built, and from the arcades or piazzas, which adorn not merely a market-place, like our Covent Garden, but absolutely all the chief avenues throughout the city; added to this, a beautiful stream of water flows through the streets, with fountains at convenient distances. It more resembles Bath than any place I have seen abroad. It stands on a lofty hill, surrounded almost entirely by the Aar; about five degrees more south than London. It is one of the most modern cities in Switzerland; for though it was rebuilt entirely after the destructive conflagration of 1405, the chief buildings are not older than the middle of the last century.

*Friday evening.*—We have been settling to-day with our vouturier, who here leaves us. We have paid him one thousand seven hundred and four francs for forty-one days, at the rate of forty-eight francs for thirty days' travelling, and twenty-four for eleven days of rest. The distance he has brought us is seven hundred and ninety-two miles; which is about one shilling and ninepence half-penny a mile, for five horses and two carriages—but then we have the hire of the carriages, two hundred francs a month each, to pay when we return to Calais; so that the rate of travelling is, on the whole, sufficiently expensive.

I have been to-day introduced to the Rev. M. Wittenbach, cousin of the celebrated editor of the *Plutarch*, published some years since by the University of Oxford. He has been fifty-two years a pastor in this town—a truly delightful person—full of good sense, piety, kindness, playful humor, courteousness, and anecdote. I am not sure I ever met with such a man. He reminded me very much of the late Rev John Newton, the friend of Cowper—so sensible, affectionate, entertaining, and venerable. He travelled to the Alps every summer for thirty-two years, till the French revo-

lution closed the series. He was known to our Coxo, who was here in 1776. He founded a Bible and Tract Society in Bern in 1792, and is the father of the British and Foreign Bible Institution in Bern. He took us over the library and the museum this afternoon. The cathedral stands on the summit of the hill on which the town is built, overlooking the Aar; on the side next the river a terrace has been erected, with immense buttresses to support the wall, which is above one hundred feet high, and which a Swiss writer, in the warmth of his patriotism, has compared to the walls of ancient Babylon. The promenade is as delicious as the prospect is magnificent. I doubt if Europe can match the scene. The female peasantry here have a costume extremely peculiar. They have ornaments of black lace fixed on the back of the head by a sort of close cap, from all sides of which an enormously deep black frill sticks upright like sails; the higher this rises, and the more stiffly it rears itself, the more fashionable is the dame who wears it. The weather to-day has been wet and cold.

*Saturday morning.*—I must preserve a saying of the great Haller. M. Wittenbach had been speaking to him of the difficulty and importance of finding the middle line, the line of true wisdom, amidst the conflicts of mankind. The venerable Haller replied—*La ligne de milieu, la ligne de sagesse, c'est une ligne mathématique qui n'a pas de largeur*—"The middle line, the line of wisdom, is a mathematical line which has no breadth." This excellent man was a native of this city, and a descendant of Haller the Reformer. He died here in 1778; and is deservedly called the great Haller, on account of his surprising talents, his success in every kind of study, his love to his country, and, above all, his piety towards God. A monument was erected to him in the Botanical Garden in 1808.

The Diet of Switzerland, composed of deputies from the twenty-two cantons, is now sitting.—When one recollects the amazingly small weight which this Diet has in the affairs of Europe, one cannot but smile to see the members walking in state every morning to the Diet in bag-wigs, cocked hats, and dressed in black; each preceded by two marshals in black, with their swords, and their hats off, adorned with cloaks of rich variegated cloth. In contrast with all this, it is painful to think that the ancient independence of the Swiss Diet is supposed to be sinking before the influence of the Holy Alliance, which dictates to it the political measures to be adopted, and will hear of no remonstrance. Switzerland will soon begin to decay, if its noble spirit of liberty be fled. It has just suspended the liberty of the press for a year, and enacted laws for banishing foreigners—steps which a century back no power in Europe could have induced the Swiss patriots to take. These false steps will infallibly lead on to worse ones.—To-day the Diet has suspended its sittings to attend a national festival for *wrestling*; a relic, and the only one in Europe, I suppose, of the wrestlers in republican Rome. In the cathedral choir are displayed, during their sessions, the trophies gained in the fifteenth century, over Charles duke of Burgundy. The cathedral is a plain, but noble



building. Bern is so healthy, that from the year 1663 to 1700, out of 4225 deaths, there were 29 persons who died between 90 and 100, and 1081 between 70 and 90, years of age. Out of four infants born, one commonly attains the age of 70.

*Sunday evening, August 10.*—I have this day had the most delightful Sunday since I left home. The French Protestant service began at ten. The church was crowded. The minister preached a most excellent sermon on sanctification as flowing from our justification before God. At two o'clock there was a baptism of his child: the service was public. A liturgical office was read; godfathers and godmothers named; vows undertaken; and excellent prayers offered up. The infant was dressed in white, in a sort of bag closed at the feet. The water was poured by the clerk from a silver ewer into the hand of the minister; a sermon admirably good was then preached by a second minister. There is no solemn reading of the Scriptures in these French churches, which I think an essential defect. There is also very little public confession of sin, or prayer.

Indeed all I see abroad raises my esteem of our English liturgy. The foreign churches, in their ardor to recede as far as possible from the church of Rome, seem to me to have too little consulted the interests of devotion, and to have attended too exclusively to public preaching. We are always in danger of extremes. The primitive church was in nothing more remarkable than in the spirit of contrition, meekness, and humility which pervaded it. The hidden life of the Christian was the main source of divine principles and practice. The church of England, where her true spirit is imbibed—her doctrines and her devotional forms—her evangelical instructions, and her prayers—perhaps comes the nearest of all the reformed communities to the practice of the first Christians; and is best adapted to such a creature as man.

After the morning sermon, a curtain, which separated an entire portion of the church opposite to the pulpit, was withdrawn, and lo, a popish altar, with two chapels, and a pulpit! For, the established religion being Lutheran, the Calvinists and Catholics use the same church. At half-past four, our fellow-traveller preached us an excellent sermon in our chamber. Thus the day has been refreshing to my mind. What a tender plant is religion in the human heart! how soon does it wither! what constant need of the heavenly dew! Lord, be thou, by thy grace and Spirit, as the dew unto us; renew, penetrate, soften, fructify, bless!—I introduced myself to the two ministers here, and found them charming persons: they lent me the work of the converted priest; the title is, "The Christian Confession of Faith, of the Pastor Henhöfer, of Muhlhausen, who, with forty families, his former hearers, turned from the Catholic to the Evangelical Lutheran Church: Spire, 1823." Muhlhausen is a village belonging to the Baron Gemmingen, two miles from the Baron's chateau at Steinegg, which is situated near Pforzheim, between Carlsruhe and Stutgard.

*Monday morning.*—The weather has now become beautifully fine; and my friend, and the lads

and I, are going off to Thun and Lucerne, for what is called the Oberland Mountain Tour, for about ten or twelve days. We leave dear Mrs. W., the child, and our Swiss maid-servant here till we return: the travelling on mules over mountains is not suitable to their state of health; whilst I am assured it may exceedingly contribute to the further re-establishment of mine. Farewell; may God preserve us all to his heavenly kingdom!

I am yours most affectionately,

D. W.

P. S.—I should have told you, that one of the most characteristic views of Swiss manners I have yet beheld, was from the window of our inn, the Falcon, on the main street of Bern. It was market-day. The crowds of persons, each in the costume of their neighborhood; their strange appearance and language; the variety of fruit and flowers exposed to sale; the constant change in the groups moving before you; the strong, healthy, robust look of every creature; the air of independence and freedom in their countenances, struck us with admiration.

#### NOTICE OF THE PASTOR HENHÖFER.

I here subjoin some further particulars of the conversion of the pastor Henhöfer, of whom I have made mention in another letter. I extract them from the "Archives du Christianisme," for 1824.

M. Aloyx Henhöfer was Catholic curé of the communes of Muhlhausen and Steinegg. In proportion as he studied the sacred Scriptures, with a conscientious desire to fulfil his pastoral duties, his preaching began to savor of the doctrine of Christ; and he gradually proclaimed the Gospel with so much unction and force, that multitudes came from the most distant villages to hear him. He was soon cited to appear before the Ecclesiastical Authorities at Bruchsal, to give an account of his doctrines. It was on this occasion he published the Confession to which I have alluded.—In this he declares, that all the time he was curé of Muhlhausen he never said a word contrary to the principles of the Catholic church; and when he preached against the abuse of ceremonies, it was only to combat the errors of some of his parishioners, who thought to satisfy their consciences by merely observing the exterior forms of religion. The authorities of Bruchsal deprived him of his living; declaring, that by his "Confession" he had pronounced his own separation.

The Baron de Gemmingen, lord of the parish, with all his household, and the curé Henhöfer at the head of forty families, comprising about 220 persons, soon after publicly separated themselves from the church of Rome. They made a profession of their faith in the evangelical doctrines, in the Baronial chapel of Steinegg; and then, as many of them as were adults, received the Holy Communion according to the rites adopted since the reunion of the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. This affecting ceremony was celebrated in a Catholic country, in the midst of a crowd assembled from all the neighboring places, with doors and windows open, without the slightest

interruption or disturbance—a proof of the excellent temper which prevails between the two communions in the Grand Duchy of Baden.

As about half the parish of Muhlhausen remained Catholics, and the new converts had of course no claim to the revenues of the living, nor to the use of the parish church, they have for the present joined themselves to the parish of Urbain de Pforzheim, and divine service is celebrated in the chapel of the castle of Steiney. M. Henhöfer has not at present thought it right to remain as their pastor, on account of the umbrage it would give the Catholics. Nevertheless he was examined as a Protestant candidate, April 11, 1823, and was ordained the following day. He is a pious, calm, amiable man, who has acquired surprising influence by his personal character.—His publication has created a lively sensation in Alsace, and the Catholics read it with even more eagerness than the Protestants.

The Baron de Gemmingen has addressed a letter to the inhabitants on his estate, from which I give an extract as a specimen of the truly evangelical principles on which his conversion rests.

“Some have said, that the motive which has determined us to embrace the Evangelical Religion is, that it is more convenient; and that we should not have thought of it, if it had imposed more difficult duties. Such language can only proceed from the most profound ignorance, and has no need of refutation with men of understanding. Without doubt a Catholic, who knows nothing but his own church, may be led to think, in seeing the small number of rites practised in the evangelical religion, that this religion is more easy, more convenient, according to the judgment of this world, than that of the church of Rome. But, my dear friends, the man who attaches himself only to the exterior of religion, who follows the usages of such or such a church, without possessing the interior life of grace, without having received Christ into his heart, without ever seeing in him, his Redeemer, his only benefactor; without being penetrated with a gratitude towards him which inflames his whole soul, and which increases in proportion as he discovers more his own corruption; this man, to whatever communion he belongs, is an useless member of the body of Jesus Christ, a branch dried up, which cannot produce any abiding fruit. The interior life, or the new birth of the man, is the essential condition, without which no one can enter into the kingdom of God. Our Lord himself has explained this truth with great force in his conversation with Nicodemus by night. To put off the old man, to strive against one's passions, is a task more difficult than the observing of these exterior practices, from which interior Christianity has but too often suffered.”

Such are some of the circumstances of this remarkable conversion. The Scriptures studied with humble prayer, seem, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to have been the only guide.—May the same sacred book, in the hands of that Spirit, lead more and more, both of Catholic and Protestant pastors, to the true knowledge of Christ: soon would the wilderness of this world blossom and flourish, and the visible church regain its primitive holiness and glory.

## LETTER VIII.

*Lauterbrunnen, Aug. 12.—Grimmel, Aug. 17, 1823.*

View from Inn at Lauterbrunnen—Lake of Thun—Interlaken—Unterseen—St. Beat—Staubach—Anecdote—Wengen Alp—Chalets—Avalanches from Jungfrau—Grindelwald—Anecdotes—Glaciers—Sheideck Alp—Miserably wet Journey—Reichenbach—Valley of Meyringen—Lake of Brienz—Fall of Giessbach—Mud Torrents—Handeck—Grimmel—Sunday Reflections—Italian Nobleman—Lord Byron.

*LAUTERBRUNNEN (Clear Fountains) in the Oberland of Bern, Tuesday, August 12, 1823, 44 miles from Bern.*

MY DEAR SISTER—I am now sitting at the window of the *salle-à-manger* at Lauterbrunnen. On the right hand of the view which is before me, the celebrated Staubbach, a fall of water of eight hundred feet, is descending in foam and spray; the perpendicular rocks present no jutting shelves to break its fall; it is a soft, gentle, elegant stream, the sport of every wind, and, as it reaches the earth, lost in vapor. Immediately beyond the nearer rocks which rise all around, the Breithorn Alp, with its never-melting snows, rears its head; it seems quite close to me, from the brightness of the snow, illuminated with the afternoon sun; but it is, in fact, twenty miles off. Next in the prospect a mountain appears with a streak or two of snow at the top; and then the Jungfrau Alp, which is twelve thousand eight hundred and seventy-two feet above the level of the sea, lifts its snowy top above the masses which hide my view of the rest of its vast form. In the nearer ground are the cottages of the village, creeping up the habitable parts of the hills, and interspersed with beautiful meadows and foliage; whilst the roaring of the Lutschinen river, which rolls through the valley, alone breaks the deep silence which reigns all around, and combines, with its noble cascades, just under my eye on my left hand, to complete one of the most beautiful and majestic views imaginable. The scenes of Zurich and Basle must yield in attraction and grandeur to this; for here the rudest and most savage mountain-prospect is united with the eternal snows of the Alps, and the sweetest picturesque home-scenery. You would wonder that I could write thus cheerfully, or even write at all, if you knew that I have been twenty miles or more in a small country car this morning, exploring the beauties of the valley, of a single point of which, as seen from the inn, I am now speaking; my senses are overpowered with wonders.

My friend, the two boys, and I, left Bern yesterday in a hired car, and came on to Thun, fifteen miles, where we embarked on the lake of that name, and reached Interlaken at seven. The lake is itself one thousand seven hundred and eighty feet above the level of the sea, and is embosomed in the midst of the Alps, which raise their lofty summits in all directions. It is esteemed one of the most beautiful in this romantic country. We stopped in our voyage to ascend to the cavern of St. Beat; a dark cave which lies on the side of the lake, and is said to go a league under the earth. A river gushes through it. The popular tradition is, that in the first century, the earliest Christian



missionary to Helvetia finished his days and was buried here. We landed at Neuhaus, hired another car, and passed through Unterseen, one of the most romantic towns we have visited. We slept at Interlaken, which lies between the lakes of Thun and Brienz, and affords a view of a prodigious chain of Alps from the Haslerberge to the Niesen. The situation of the village is most lovely; but the place has much fallen off during the last four or five years—the inn bad—the walks overgrown with weeds—every thing neglected. Even the walnut-trees, once the finest in Switzerland, seem to languish.

We set off to Lauterbrunnen this morning at seven; and on entering the valley were astonished at every step, at the scenes which opened before us. When he approached the Staubbach (dust-stream) we found it was composed of an immense mass of water which the great height disperses as it falls. After proceeding in the car two leagues, we ascended on foot an enormous rock, for an hour and a half, to see the cascade of Schiltwaldbach, rushing between two mountains with a surprising force. It would have amused you to see our faint and weary steps toiling up the rock under a burning sun; I was the worst of the party, and leant most heavily on the arm of the guide. When we reached the top, some cold chamois and beef, with water from the stream, dashed with eau de cerise, served to recruit our strength. We lay along on the grass or rocks, under the shade of an overhanging mountain, for more than an hour, contemplating the new scenes before us, and meditating on the greatness and goodness of our heavenly Father apparent in the operations of his hands—"O Lord, how wonderful are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches."

On our return, we saw another cascade, not equal in height to the Staubbach, but surpassing it in other respects. An immense body of water pours, or rather dashes, out of an aperture, which it seems to have opened in the side of the rock; the foam is so great, that two rainbows are formed by its spray; one near the ground, the other at its first rushing upon the edge of the aperture, perhaps one hundred feet up the rock. As we were coming home, our guide, who speaks English, said to us, "Sirs, do you see the row of firs growing on that shelf about eight hundred feet from the ground, just below the summit of the rock over against 'is'?"—"Yes."—"Last winter, a cottager hearing that his goats were on that ridge, went down after them; it was in January, and snow covered all its surface; he trod on a stone which had ice under the thin snow; the stone gave way as he trod; he slipped, fell, and was literally dashed to pieces." Such are the tremendous accidents perpetually occurring in Switzerland. We were petrified with horror. May we be ever ready for death, whether it meet us by some unexpected calamity, or steal gradually upon us! Such is man's self-flattery, that in point of fact, death comes unawares on most.\*

\* I have often reflected on the admission of Gibbon that the possibility of unusual and sudden modes of death should not be without its influence on the mind.

"Mr. Buffon," he says, "from our disregard of the

In the parish of Lauterbrunnen (the sweet little church is just below) there are three hamlets, Murron, Grindelwald, and Wengen, on the top of the mountain; they are about five thousand feet above the sea, and contain thirty houses each, where the cattle are fed during the summer. The old people of seventy and eighty come regularly to church every Sunday, three or four leagues, when the weather allows; for during nearly six months, the whole parish is covered with snow, and torrents roll down every path. The people are Protestants; but there is an air of untidiness and roughness about them, arising from their manner of life. The cottagers gain sevenpence halfpenny a day and their food. A farm-house, with all kinds of rooms and offices, can be built for about six hundred francs, twenty-three pounds; but then it is all of wood. The river here is a cascade of snow-water, flowing from the glaciers above; a thick, dirty, foaming stream. The people eat no bread, but live on potatoes, milk, and cheese, with meat occasionally. These mountains produce neither corn nor wine. The hay-harvest is now beginning, August 12th. The inn at Lauterbrunnen is extremely good; far, far better than that at Interlaken. The landlord was butler to the celebrated Madame de Staël.

*Wednesday, August 13th, 1823, Grindelwald, 5 afternoon.*—Will you believe that we have actually crossed one of the fearful Alps to-day? By nine o'clock this morning we had travelled three hours, and were seated on the roof of a chalet (a hut) taking our early dinner. You may judge of the height we had reached, when I say, that for three hours we mounted almost perpendicularly, as fast as our horses and mules could carry us; we had, in fact, ascended six thousand feet above the level of the sea. Before us was the Jungfrau Alp, with only one unbroken valley between us; it is of the enormous height just mentioned; \* but from the chalet it appeared even loftier than it had done at Lauterbrunnen, because all intervening objects were removed. Our view from the roof of the chalet was most magnificent. On our extreme right was the Silver Horn Alp, with an unvaried cap of snow. On our left was the Monk Alp; and last, the Eiger Alp. Before us was the Jungfrau or Virgin Alp, so called, because no human foot has ascended it. It appeared in inexpressible dignity, and seemed to command proudly all the neighboring summits. We could clearly discern on it the line of perpetual snow; the crags and shelves; the precipitous sides; the glaciers and torrents.

As we were eating quite gaily our meat and bread, with milk which the herdsman brought us, and were admiring the sublime scenery around

possibility of death within the four-and-twenty hours, concludes that a chance which falls below or rises above ten thousand to one, will never affect the fears of a reasonable man. The fact is true, but our courage is the effect of thoughtlessness, rather than of reflection. If a public lottery were drawn for the choice of an immediate victim, and if our name were inscribed on one of the ten thousand tickets, should we be perfectly easy?"

How strikingly is this applicable to the subject of religion; and how much does it illustrate the wisdom of habitual preparation for death!

\* 12,872 feet.

us, which the superb fineness of the day greatly augmented, we suddenly heard a sound like distant thunder—we started—the guide told us it was an avalanche, or fall of a body of snow, from a lofty, precipitous ridge of the Jungfrau, to the next projecting cliff below. We turned round, and could see nothing—we resumed our meal. Soon the guide with the utmost eagerness bade us look towards the place to which he pointed—we now saw an immense body of snow rushing down to the shelf beneath—in an instant we again heard a noise like a tremendous clap of thunder—the more startling from the perfect stillness on the face of nature—our food involuntarily quivered in our hands—the impression for the moment was alarming—a kind of apprehension seized our minds for which we could scarcely account. The fact is, the snow which we beheld in its fall was an amazing mass; and the depth of its descent was at least a thousand feet; whilst the report of the concussion was greatly increased by the echo. We saw, after two or three great avalanches, the loaded snow on the lower shelf begin to flow down like a river into the valley beneath. These avalanches, when they fall near the public roads, which is often the case, are most destructive and dangerous.

But it is time for me to tell you that we rose at half-past four this morning, and at six were in cavalcade on two horses and two mules, with a guide, and two servants to bring back the beasts; all hired over-night for the passage of the Alps, the guides at six francs a day, the animals nine—our bags were tied on behind us; the guides carried our staves, umbrellas, and provisions. My eldest lad went first, then our kind fellow-traveller, each on a mule; my younger son and I followed on horses. We ascended by a narrow winding path, sometimes by steps, then across a quag, then over a little champaign country, but mostly over loose stones. After an hour's ride, we had ascended three thousand four hundred and fifty feet, (Lauterbrunnen, where we slept, is two thousand four hundred and fifty feet above the sea,) and passed a village of about forty houses, built of wood, occupied by small proprietors of land, and peasants. After two hours' further ride, we reached the chalet of which I have spoken; we were then on the top of the Wengen Alp—for every Alp has its name.

These chalets are inhabited for three months and a half only of the year, by farmers' servants, who first drive up their cattle by the same road we came, and then feed them there during the summer, and make cheese of the milk. The chalets are wretched sheds, of beams uncut, without chimneys, the roof of wood, secured by rows of large rough stones. The people live on milk and cheese, and have a sad, unhealthy look. No occupation can be imagined more solitary and despicable. But the Swiss peasant can read, and the Bible can cheer, and I trust, in many instances, does cheer, his lonely hours. We stayed nearly two hours at the place to rest the beasts, as well as ourselves. Soon after eleven, we began to descend, when the inconveniences we had found in our ascent, were nothing compared with what we now had to experience. I can only liken it to the going down the roof of a house. The ter-

ror was increased by the additional feeling, that bridles were useless, and that you must give your animal his head. The edges of precipices, rivers, narrow bridges of only two beams, stones yielding to the foot, gaps of road descending by steps—you could not help yourself. The guide told you it was nothing; the animals went on at the rate of three miles an hour unconcerned, stopping to crop the grass and flowers as they passed; and, after three hours and a half of descent, we were landed safely at the valley of Grindelwald. This valley is three thousand one hundred and fifty feet above the sea—about the height, I think, of Snowdon in Wales.\* As we were coming down to it, we observed a wide-spread desolation; trees torn up by the roots and stripped; meadows covered with small rock or dust; the road obstructed; vast masses of stone between us and the nearest Alp, the Wetterhorn: we inquired the cause. A dreadful mass had burst off from the rock last winter, during the night, and had literally destroyed every thing which it met in its course; happily no lives were lost.

No words can describe the scenes of this day. How great must that God be who formed all these wonders, and who sustains them all! "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou visitest him?" The people here are Protestants, and each parish has a church. As we ascended to Wengen, the women and children came out and sung us a hymn very sweetly. The beauty and magnificence of nature could not but heighten our feelings of religious awe, gratitude, and love. Devotion seemed to be aided by the majestic temple by which we were surrounded.

The inn is just under the Mettenberg Alp. The weather yesterday and to-day has been the finest since we left England; not a cloud, and yet not too hot; twenty parties have crossed the Wengen Alp this summer, ladies as well as gentlemen. The snow has fallen, so lately as this month, about twenty-three feet deep. I forgot to tell you, that two of our beasts were named Gabby and Manny; for a long time we supposed these were the real names; at last our guide rather shocked us by saying, that the first was called Gabriel, and the second Immanuel! Our journey to-day was twenty-one miles, in eight hours and a half. We have now a simple luxury of the most refreshing kind; ice in a basin, which we put into our wine or milk, and which gives a coolness quite surprising, now that the thermometer is eighty. The ice comes from a neighboring glacier, which we visited this afternoon, tired as we were.

It was the first glacier we had seen, and a most astonishing sight—an inclined plane of a league or more, covered with congealed snow, ice, and water, according as the summer sun, the heat of the earth, the storms, and the rush of superincumbent matter, have been more or less. From this plain, the glacier descends a precipice or ravine, filling up the cavity, with the same combined materials of snow, ice, and water, till it reaches the valley of Grindelwald, where we saw it. It appeared to us an enormous rock of cleft masses of ice, perhaps one hundred feet above the earth, with caverns worn by the water at the bottom.

\* Mr. Pennant fixes the height of Snowdon at 3568 feet.



From this sort of caverns the snow-rivers rush from which the Rhine, Rhone, &c. are supplied.

A Swiss Protestant minister was lost here a few years back, by incautiously stooping to examine a gaping fissure. He lost his balance, and in one instant perished. In the year 1790, the innkeeper at Grindelwald, named Christian Boren, fell into a crevice, as he was conducting his flock of sheep from Bäniseck. Happily he sunk near the great torrent which flows within the glacier; and following its bed underneath the caverns of ice, arrived at length, almost by a miracle, at the foot of the glacier, with only one arm broken. He lived many years after. Every thing in Switzerland is mixed up with sudden catastrophes.

*Thursday evening, August 14, Meyringen, chief place of the Valley of Hasli, in the canton of Bern.* We have had a completely wet morning; four hours' ride over the same sort of unaccountable road as yesterday, with the gratifying accompaniments of being soaked with rain, and of having the beauties of the journey entirely obscured from our view by the clouds. The day promised to be pretty fine when we started at six this morning, and continued without rain as we ascended the Scheideck Alp, (six thousand and forty-five feet above the level of the sea;) but when we came to the brow, instead of enjoying a view of the beautiful valley of Meyringen, we found ourselves enveloped in thick clouds which rose in masses from below, and met us full in the face. We had three umbrellas; but these, on horseback, with a pelting rain, were not of much use; our great coats were, however, of essential service. We rested about an hour at a wretched hut, only better than a chalet. The eau de vie de Cognac, with which our guide was furnished, was a real benefit to us in this emergency, as well as the hot milk we obtained here. We mounted again in woful plight, for three hours more of rain, fog, clouds, swollen rivers. As we approached Meyringen, our guide, without saying a word, directed us across a meadow to visit some cascades, as calmly as if nothing had happened! They were grand enough; but my sad state of wet and fatigue deprived me of all pleasure in the sight. The fact, however, is, that the Reichenbach, rolling with a fine stream, pours into the valley of Meyringen by five cascades of eighty or one hundred feet each, and then joins the Aar, which flows through Meyringen.

I must tell you, disconsolate as I am, that soon after we left Grindelwald we came to the second or upper glacier; for there are two at that place. We alighted and went on the enormous flakes of ice: the water was dropping all around; and when we came off them, we could see the hollows which the water had scooped out underneath. As we went on our way, we had a still better view of these mountains of ice from above. They are the most remarkable things we have seen; the upper one has advanced, that is, invaded the land, two thousand feet in the last twenty years. The tradition of Grindelwald is, that there were formerly fertile valleys in the spot now choked up with these masses of ice. Glaciers, says M. Ebel, are, in the first instance, vast beds of ice formed above the limits of perpetual snow, and which are sometimes enclosed in the

valleys of the high mountains, and there held immovably; and sometimes, when they are not held there, descend by the sides of the valleys. This motion is produced, in part, by the weight of the ice, which draws it on when it loses its equilibrium; but chiefly, by the melting and diminution of the ice beneath, and on the sides, where the glacier (or body of ice) touches the earth or rocks. The glacier, thus losing its centre of gravity, bursts asunder with a dreadful noise, and glides down the declivity till it finds a new support. There are about 400 in the chain of Alps from Mount Blanc to the Tyrol; covering a space of about 1000 square miles: the depth of which varies from 100 to 600 feet.

*Meyringen, Friday, August 15.*—This morning, instead of the guide calling us at four o'clock, he did not come to our rooms till half-past seven. The clouds and heavy rain had gained us this prolonged repose. Ten hours' sleep was by no means disagreeable to us. After breakfast, the day cleared up a little, and we hired a car, and drove nine miles, to the lake of Brienz.

The valley of Meyringen, through which we passed, is esteemed one of the most beautiful of all the Swiss valleys; the rocks on each side are so lofty, the intervening vale so lovely (about one or two miles broad,) the outline so variegated—but the special beauty is the number of cascades descending the sides of the overhanging cliffs, and divided into separate falls. At one spot, we had in view at the same time four or five cascades, each falling one or two hundred feet. The village of Brienz is romantically situated on the lake, with one thousand five hundred inhabitants; two good inns, and a third unfinished. In fact, the visitors to Switzerland, since the peace, are multiplying, and improving the inns every where. We took a boat to cross the lake, and visit the fall of the Giessbach, about two miles. We were rowed by an old woman near seventy, her daughter, and her little grand-daughter, about eight or ten years old; one man steering. The Giessbach descends from the Schwarzhorn Alp, and is one of the finest cataracts we have seen; it has ten separate descents, the beauty of which is heightened by scenery the most varied and romantic. At two or three points of view, we had the impetuous torrents on our left, relieved by a foreground of the most picturesque foliage, and contrasted with the soft tranquillity of the lake on our right; while the head of the fall was concealed by lofty firs. As we returned, the owner of the adjoining land, with his children, entertained us with some delightful music. A New Testament was in the room. It is, indeed, most pleasing to find, throughout this country, Bibles and books of devotion: I saw in a miserable chalet on the mountain, yesterday, Arndt's excellent work on True Christianity. All places are alike to the God and Father of all; and some of these simple peasants, perhaps, who know nothing but their Bibles and their mountains, may be happier than most of the inhabitants of Paris or London. Christianity is a universal blessing for ruined man; and to trace its effects and encourage in some degree, however small, its professed followers in obeying it, is one of the noblest duties of an Englishman on a foreign tour.

I should tell you, that it is on the borders of the lake of Brienz that some of those tremendous torrents of moistened clay rush from the Alps, and carry every thing before them. They are formed by the pools of water collected in the clayey portions of the rocks, which accumulate till they burst their barriers. In 1797, thirty-seven houses and a great number of gardens and meadows were literally buried under one of these turbid muddy streams. The villagers of Schwend and Hochstetten escaped only by going up on the most elevated part of the roofs of their houses. The lake was several months in recovering its usual purity.

*Saturday, August 16, three o'clock, afternoon.*—We are just arrived on the wildest of all the Swiss mountains, the Grimsel, six thousand feet above the sea; twenty-four miles from Meyringen. We are at a lone house, called the Hospice, and the only one for ten more long mountainous leagues. The danger of not meeting beds was, therefore, so alarming, that we sent on a courier this morning at three o'clock to engage rooms. The man had gone the eight leagues on foot, and had returned about three of them, when we met him, at one o'clock; that is, he had run, or walked, thirty-three miles in ten hours, over a road, which if you had seen, you would have thought that none but goats could pass. We have been nine hours and a quarter going, on horses and mules, the twenty-four miles. Nothing more surprises me than the inexhaustible variety of grand outline and beautiful scenery in this wonderful Switzerland. But I find it is one thing to have some relish for the beauties of nature, and another to be able to describe them. I am altogether incapable of the task.

We have, in fact, passed to-day, a country quite as deserving to be seen as any thing we have already visited, and yet utterly different. The character of the valley of the Aar is wild and savage grandeur; desolation upon desolation; a road, or rather crag, which all the sagacity of our mules could scarcely overcome; sometimes, rude stone steps; then, the smooth slippery back of a rock; then, loose pebbles; then, quagmire; then, enormous sharp stones, from which the winter torrents had worn away all the earth, and left only holes for the beasts to tread in. Still upon this road, the mules passed with perfect safety. We followed the course of the Aar the whole of the way, which forms continual cascades, foaming furiously over rocks which frequently almost fill up its bed. By the bye, I found that our mules had been this road thirty or forty times already, and this encouraged us to set off; and most amply have we been rewarded. The fall of the Aar, called the Handeck, is magnificent indeed. The body of water is immense, another river uniting with it at the fall; and the peculiarity is, that a scooped rock, or rather a narrow basin, or chasm of rocks, opens an abyss of two hundred feet to receive the torrent. To look down it made me quite giddy. We are now so high, that it is excessively cold, though the sun shines, and we left Meyringen at a thermometer about seventy. We had, indeed, passed over ground as high both on Wednesday and Thursday; but this is the first time we have stopped at such an elevation. Our

friend has not accompanied us, as he passed the Grimsel four years ago, and he wished to improve the time, by visiting some places new to him. My dear sons and I, with two mules, a horse, a guide, and a servant who tends the mules, are now the whole party.

I must, before I finish to-day, translate for you a Latin note out of the strangers' book here: "We were first overcome by heat and fatigue; then, by rain, wind, cold, and the badness of the roads; we came here without having seen what we travelled on purpose to see; and all hope of better weather being lost, we departed, imprecating every thing evil against mount Grimsel." Such is the angry record of two gentlemen, one from Petersburg, the other from Leipsic.

*Sunday, August 17.*—This is my ninth Sunday, and we are in a situation the most desolate and gloomy, as to outward things, possible—in a lone house, twelve mountain miles from any church—not a tree nor shrub to be seen—nothing but barren rocks piled one upon another—not a creature that understands English, and only one who understands French. Still, if God is with us, it is enough. We have our morning service, in a quiet, tranquil room, with a fire, (for it is just like a keen December day;) using as many of the church prayers as I could remember—for we have only a pocket bible with us—reading some psalms and lessons, and closing with a sermon, or rather exposition. We then went to take a little turn to warm our feet; and now my dear sons are employed in writing on a subject which I have given them, till our afternoon service. I cannot do better than follow their example.

The first reflection that occurs to me, whilst meditating in this solitude, is the GREATNESS AND GOODNESS of that God who upholds and governs all this wild and stupendous scene around us—that God who "sits on the circle of the heavens," and before whom "the mountains are as nothing." But all this divine glory in nature is accompanied with marks of his wrath; the effects of the convulsions of the deluge are every where visible—the fountains of the great deep have been broken up, the mountains have been rent asunder, the earth has been shaken out of its place. How good, then, is our heavenly Father, who still spares a wicked and ungrateful world, which he has shown that he could instantly destroy; nay, farther, how much more gracious is He, who, instead of destroying the world as it deserves, has given his only-begotten Son, to offer himself up as a sacrifice for our sins! May the works of creation ever lead up our minds to God in Jesus Christ our Lord! It is thus that our Saviour teaches us to employ all the objects of nature, in his divine discourses.

The next thought that strikes my mind is, the MANY BLESSINGS which have accompanied my family and me on this journey. Every thing has turned out for our good; the weather has cooled the season, and made our travelling safe and agreeable; delays have proved benefits. Ever since we set off we have had blessing upon blessing.

In the next place, how unspeakable is the COMFORT OF PRAYER! Wherever I am, my family can pray for me, and I can pray for my family.



The "throne of grace" is accessible at all times, and in all places. My dear Mrs. W. and child now at Bern, my affectionate mother and family at London, my large and beloved flock at St. John's, are united to me by the bond of prayer; all may confer benefits and receive them, by intercession to that God who is every where present and has all things in his hands.

Again, let me reflect on the duty of CONTENTMENT AND GRATITUDE; I see nothing abroad, but what makes me more thankful for the lot Providence has appointed me at home. Switzerland is beautiful to visit in a summer tour; but England is the happier land in all respects, if she knew her privileges. Consider the family in this inn. In July last, the snow was twenty-three feet deep behind the house. For nine months in the year, the family are compelled to leave it to a man and two dogs, and go down to the plain of Meyringen; and when they are here in the summer, they have to pass twenty-four miles of steep mountain road, whenever they go to church.

Once more, let me make a remark on THE PLACE ITSELF where I am writing. It is called an Hospice or Spital. It was enlarged last year with eleven new rooms by the government of Bern; and the innkeeper is obliged to entertain strangers, to receive the poor gratis, and keep the house open all the winter, for fear any travellers should be passing. May not this remind me of that true hospice and refuge, which our Saviour has set up in the Gospel, for the wandering traveller? The names of the persons who enlarged this house are painted in great characters on the wall of the dining-room; should not this teach me to engrave, as it were, the Saviour's name on the tablet of my heart, and record the memory of his grace there?

Further, let me consider the CHARITY with which we should regard these simple people. The poor cottagers come from Murren, six leagues, six thousand feet of descent and ascent, to Lauterbrunnen church, even when seventy or eighty years old. Many of the houses have not only the names of the builder, but texts of Scripture, written on the outside. In a small inn at Guttanen, four leagues off, where we stopped yesterday, I found inscriptions on each side of the door of the chamber; one of which was to this effect, "On God's grace and good blessing, all man's success depends; and without his help and mercy, all man's doings are vain." I find in this inn, the Grimsel, a very excellent book of prayers, and a pious French tract; given, probably, by the Basle Tract Society. There are a man and his wife and seven children here, and six servants. I have been talking to the only daughter, who understands French, and have given her a Testament; she was very attentive to what I said, and asked me if I knew Dr. Steinkopf, whom she saw some years ago. I am far from dwelling on such small circumstances; but surely they may lead us to hope, that God our Saviour has many true disciples in these wild deserts—many who love, and fear, and obey him in simplicity of heart. The most enlarged charity is ever the duty of a traveller.

Lastly, I cannot but reflect on the unspeakable importance of Englishmen ACTING CONSISTENTLY as Christians, when abroad. We met here last

night, at supper, (at five) an Italian nobleman, a Florentine, and two English gentlemen of family; to-day, though it is Sunday, all have gone on their journey. Now, if every Englishman would but keep holy the Sabbath, and show what the Protestant religion is, in his conduct, unnumbered blessings might follow. The Italian nobleman seemed a man of reading and acuteness. He spoke rather contemptuously of the Pope, and the supposed designs of the see of Rome. He was acquainted with our English history, and did not conceal his admiration of our free constitution, on which he offered some comments that showed an independent, discriminating mind. In short, he discoursed without reserve on every subject that was started. Especially he joined in abhorrence of the principles of lord Byron. He admitted the charms of his poetry; but there seemed to be a strong impression on his mind that such a man was really most pernicious and despicable. I was glad to hear him say, that no persons of character in Italy or elsewhere would associate with him.

It is impossible to foresee what good might be done by the ten or fifteen thousand British travellers who are scattered over Europe, if they acted an open, kind, consistent, religious part, as they ought; but if they are ashamed of their principles, and conform, one in one thing, and another in another, to the wrong practices of the Continent, they share in its guilt, and, indeed, are answerable for all the evil which they might have prevented, or remedied, by the manly discharge of their duty as servants of Christ.

I am yours most affectionately,

D. W.

#### LETTER IX.

*Furca Alp, August 18.—Bern, August 24, 1823.*

Glacier of Rhone—Furca Alp—Realp—Capuchin Friar—Hospital—Cold—Valley of Reuss—Devil's Bridge—Amsteg—New Road—Altorf—William Tell—Fluelen—Lake of four Cantons—Switz—Mount Righi—Storm—Mount Pilate—Ruin of Goldau—Stranger's Book—King of England—Italians and Russians—Kusnacht—Lucern—William Tell—Wooden Bridges—Pere Girard—Luther—Zofingen—Heizogenbuchs—Bern—Sunday—Fast—English Service—Government of Bern and England.

HOSPITAL OF HOPENDAL, (*place for the reception of strangers and travellers,*) at the foot of Mount St. Gothard, in the Canton of Uri, Monday, Aug. 18, 1823.

WE set off, my dear sister, this morning, from the Hospice of the Grimsel, at a quarter before six: the morning was dull, but without rain for some time. As we ascended the remaining part of the Grimsel Alp, we looked behind us and saw a thick white cloud completely filling the valley, and rising gradually up the mountain. We had nearly three thousand feet to go before we reached the summit, by a road far worse than any we had yet passed. We had continually to cross masses of snow, quagmires, and torrents without bridges. We had stones in the manner of stairs

on Saturday, but to-day we had stones in the manner of falls and pits ; so that when the mules stepped down, it was with a plunge : we had, also, many slippery backs of rocks. You may judge of the sort of difficulties by this circumstance, that as soon as we began to descend, we were obliged to alight, and walk down the whole of this frightful Alp.

Immediately in the valley between the Grimsel and the Furca Alps is the glacier of the Rhone, which has its source here. This glacier far surpasses in extent and grandeur those at Grindelwald—it is as if an immense sea, when rushing down the valley, had been suddenly turned into ice, with all its agitations. I conjecture, from my eye, that it may be about eight hundred or one thousand feet wide, four thousand long, and five or six hundred deep. Imagine yourself only at the foot of such a sea of broken ice, from beneath which twenty or more turbid snow-streams are bursting out, which form the Rhone. As soon as we had crossed the valley, through which the Rhone passes, we began to ascend the Furca Alp, eight thousand eight hundred and eighty feet above the level of the sea, and two thousand eight hundred and eighty above the Hospice where we had slept. As we mounted up, another glacier appeared on our right. The cold was yet more intense than on the Grimsel. Our limbs were completely benumbed. The rain also now began to fall, so that we lost the noble view of the distant Alps, which in fine weather is incomparably grand. As soon as we had reached the top, we were obliged to alight and descend, not a mountain of earth, but an immense mountain of snow, over which we slid and walked as well as we could.—I can quite understand now, why the snow is perpetual on the higher Alps : we were almost frozen at eight thousand feet ; what, then, must be the intensity of cold, at twelve or thirteen thousand feet !

After a journey of five hours and a half (four of which were in the rain), we reached the first inhabited house, the hospice of Realp. When we came to the door, I was surprised to see the guide ring the bell, and then humbly take off his hat, when the door opened ; and much more to see a venerable Capuchin friar come out with a long beard, a brown garment of the coarsest cloth, reaching to his feet, with a large hood hanging behind, and girded round his waist with a thick common cord ; whilst a deep frill of coarse linen fell a good way down his breast. He wore no stockings, and only rough sandals on his feet.—He came gravely up to us. He could not speak French ; but his look was benignant, and he showed us into his room with much courtesy, brought us a bottle of a light sweet Italian wine, spread a cloth for us, and then retired, whilst we ate the provisions we had brought with us. As we were dripping wet, we begged to have the wine made hot : it was done in the most comfortable manner possible. We had time during dinner to look round the room—furniture old, but convenient—figures of our Saviour—a printed list, several feet long, of the abbots of his order—holy water—a stove—and in a very small cupboard his library and bed. I tried to make the friar understand me in Latin, but without success. We paid for our

entertainment, gave something for the poor, set off again about twelve, and came on here, two leagues, making twenty-four miles, which, with the Alps and the rain, made a formidable day's journey.

We are now at a comfortable inn at the small Catholic village of Hospital, in the canton of Uri, four thousand five hundred and forty-nine feet above the sea, (therefore, cold enough, I assure you,) with thirty-four houses, a church, and chapel. At the top of the village stands a half-ruined castle, which once belonged to the lords of the Hospital, or hospice ; for all the villages on these Alps seem to have been designed as refuges for travellers.—Through the village flows the arm of the Reuss river, which springs from the Furca glacier.—The village is on the road for Mount St. Gothard. The weather has been unfavorable to-day, but we have had no fogs to obscure materially our prospect, either of the glaciers, or of the wild scenery through which we have passed ; only we lost the view of the distant Alps.

We have now overcome one of the grand difficulties of the Swiss tourist, the passage of the Grimsel and the Furca. The boy who went with my friend to Stanz returned to us last night, saying that his master was weary of the passage of the mountains, and had sent him and the horse back, determined to make his way to Lucern by cars or by the Lake. In these mountainous places the weather is commonly bad. Hospital is the highest public inhabited village in Switzerland ; and the inn-keeper's brief description of the weather is, that they have frost and snow for nine months in the year, and rain for the remaining three. There are no trees in this valley, not even the hardy fir ; all is one wild surface, without foliage. Every stick of wood for domestic use is brought up some leagues, from Amsteg. The cows and goats feed on the grass, which just now looks a little pleasant ; but even these animals have a wild, rough appearance, especially the cows. The lakes here are too cold for fish.

The poor inhabitants of this, and other villages around, suffered extremely during the war. The Austrians and French fought in the very streets of Hospital ; our innkeeper tells me the scenes were dreadful beyond description. How frightful and horrible is this to all our best feelings and habits ! How implacable is the ambition of man ! What a scene must it have been, to behold the natural terrors of the Alps aggravated by the miseries of war ! But so it is. There is hardly a rock or precipice in Switzerland, which has not been the spot of desperate conflict. Surely, an English traveller cannot hear of these things, and reflect on the events of the late revolutionary war, without some gratitude to God, for having exempted his happy country from such calamities. And the gratitude will be increased by comparing the climate and general circumstances of these Alpine regions, with those of his native land.

*Hospital, Tuesday morning, 7 o'clock.*—For so long the weather has allowed us to rest. We have had an excellent night ; we were in bed about half-past eight. These dinners at eleven, and suppers at five, suit us. I never was better in my life. The breakfast is now coming in, and the weather has suddenly cleared up ; so that the



sun is mounting over the Alps before our window, and is throwing this romantic village into a beautiful picture of light and shade—and hurries us off for our day's journey.

*Amstag, one o'clock, Valley of the Reuss, sixteen miles from Hospital.*—I am now sitting, faint with heat, at one of the windows of the dining hall of the inn, with a burning sun full on the four open windows of the room;—such is the effect of a descent of two or three thousand feet in this marvellous country—yesterday as cold as Christmas, to-day as hot as Midsummer. But this is nothing; I must positively employ half an hour, while dinner is preparing, in giving you some idea, if I can, of the extraordinary valley through which we have been passing. It is called, by the inhabitants, Krachenthal, Roaring Valley, on account of the tremendous noise with which the Reuss rushes from rock to rock. It is certainly one of the wonders of Switzerland.

We rode about two miles, on leaving the Hospital, in the wide open valley, without a tree, the Reuss rolling along its course; when we came to a mighty rock, which seemed quite to stop the road. As we approached, we found a tunnel or gallery had been bored through the solid granite, fifteen feet high, twelve broad, and two hundred and twenty long. This is better than the bridge hung with chains, and dangling on the outside of the rock over the torrent, which was the old road. We now descended by a narrow paved way, ten feet wide, to what it called the Devil's Bridge, thrown over the fall of the Reuss, which here meets with tremendous precipices, and foams as it rushes down them. The bridge seems built in the air, from its elevation and boldness; it is one hundred feet above the river. Its span is seventy-five feet, and the fall of the Reuss under it, in a slanting direction, is at least three hundred feet. The architect is not known; and the extreme frightfulness of the cataract over which it is thrown, has probably led the common people to ascribe it to fairies first, and then to the evil spirit. The scene is, perhaps, unparalleled for sublimity and terror. The road after this continues to descend the valley, like stairs for steepness. It is built against the perpendicular rock, and sustained in many places by arches and walls on the side of frightful gulfs. For a league this miraculous sort of tract extends. During all this time the roaring Reuss continues to roll its agitated torrent. I think this is the most romantic of all the Swiss rivers. It never ceases its rage. From rock to rock, from precipice to precipice, it dashes forward, with a succession of falls; sometimes lost among the masses of stone, then appearing again in redoubled force.

We soon came to Goeschinen, where a new road, passable for carriages, begins, and goes on nearly four leagues, to Amstag, the place where I am now writing. It is a surprising undertaking for a small Swiss canton, (Uri) to have formed a road, twenty-five feet wide, by the labor of several thousand hands in three years; I know nothing in England like it for hardy and dangerous enterprise. It is as smooth as our Bath road; and has been formed by blowing up rocks, dividing places dangerous to travellers, throwing bridges over the torrents, (there are seven or eight) still keeping the inclination so gentle, that it descends only

about seven feet in one hundred. Conceive our delight in witnessing this bold undertaking, especially when you consider that the valley itself is one of the most picturesque we have yet seen; noble mountains; the river winding, now its frightful, and then its gentle, course; ravines intersecting the valley, and carrying down the smaller torrents; meadows and orchards delighting the eye as we descended lower; a forest of firs, varying the scenery for a mile or more; villages, with their little chapels, now and then appearing: the whole augmented by one of the finest days nature ever presented to man, with a gentle north wind to moderate the heat. I was grieved to see that in many places the new road was already injured by the torrents and falling masses of rocks, so that a constant expense will be incurred—but dinner interrupts my story.

I resume my letter at *Altorf, the capital of the canton of Uri, half-past seven, Tuesday evening*, after a ride of three hours and a half. I was speaking of the expense and labor which this new road will require, and which heighten the merit of the enterprise. I should add, that it very much protects passengers from the danger of the avalanches from the mountains, which were often destructive. Such was the terror of them, that formerly travellers were not allowed to speak in certain parts of the road, lest even that slight agitation of the air should occasion a fall of snow.\* It further facilitates the immense traffic carried on between Lucern, Milan, and Northern Italy. We met a drove of noble oxen, and many teams of mules laden with casks. Milan is twelve or thirteen days' journey from Hospital. The people in these villages seem to me untidy and poor. The meadows are rich; and they use a high wooden frame for drying hay, which raises the grass above the ground, and makes it in twelve or fourteen hours.

In coming on to Altorf, we stopped at Burglen to visit a chapel built on the spot where William Tell was born. It is decorated with pictures relating to the events of his life. Altorf is a small Catholic town of one thousand six hundred souls. It abounds with monuments of William Tell. The tower, the fountains,—every thing is designed to commemorate him. His history is connected with all the liberty of Switzerland.

We met on our way to-day many peasants laden with wood for the valley of Ursern, where Hospital is. As no trees grow there, all their wood (coals are unknown) is brought up three leagues. On our road, also, we met our friend and companion, who, after spending his Sunday at Stantz, came to Altorf last night, and was going to visit the Vale of the Reuss; we are now at the same hotel. He reports that he remained at Stantz on Saturday, not because he was weary of the mountain road, but because his horse and boy were equally bad, so bad that he despaired of reaching Lucern by their means. He thinks the new road which I have so much commended, takes off, in some places, from the picturesque beauty of the scenery, as he beheld it four years since.

\* I am sorry to see from the Swiss Journals that the devastation occasioned by the avalanches this winter (1824) has been particularly great. The valleys of Gauli, Gadmen, and Guttanen, are stated to have suffered severely.

*Switz, the capital of the canton of that name, (and from which the whole of the country is called,) Wednesday, quarter before 10.*—We set off this morning a quarter before six, and saw the melancholy effects of a fire at Altorf, in 1799. The ruined houses remained yet unrepaired. We came to Flüelen in an hour, and there embarked on the lake of Lucern for Brunnen. The passage of two hours was exquisite, from the noble and grand character of the scenery of the lake. We stopped a moment at the spot where William Tell escaped from the boat in which they were conveying him to prison, and where a chapel is now built.

I promised to tell you something about this extraordinary man. It was in November, 1307, that the Austrian bailiff Gesler, having placed his hat upon a pole, at Altorf, and ordered every one who passed to salute it, William Tell nobly refused. He was condemned, as you may remember, to shoot at an apple placed on the head of his son. He struck off the apple; but Gesler, observing a second arrow in the hand of Tell, asked him what he meant to do with it: "It was destined for you," replied he, "if I had killed my child." He was seized instantly, chained, and thrown into a boat which was to convey the governor back to his castle at Küssnacht. A storm fell on the lake. In imminent danger of perishing, they released Tell from his chains, and suffered him to take the guidance of the vessel. The hero leaped on shore upon the rock where the chapel now stands; outstripped Gesler; waited for him in a hollow path, and transfixed him with an arrow. The Linden tree, at Altorf, against which the child stood, remained till 1567, two hundred years after the death of Tell, which happened in 1356. His family was not extinct until the year 1720. A chapel stands on the spot, at Grutli, where the confederation oath was taken, in January 1308. Thus was the foundation of liberty and knowledge, of national virtue and piety, laid in Switzerland. The Reformation two centuries after, so far as it extended, completed the deliverance.

We landed at Brunnen at nine, and came on to Switz. The lake we have crossed is, perhaps, the finest in Switzerland—eight leagues long, four and a half wide, bordering on the four forest cantons, Switz, Uri, Unterwald, and Lucern. Between Brunnen and Switz, we passed the bridge, covered as usual, of Ibach, where the battle took place between Suwarrow and Massena, in 1799.

*Twelve o'clock.*—I never dined better in my life at eleven o'clock, than I have here: we are now going to ascend mount Righi. This town of Switz is in a garden of natural beauties. The vast rocks behind it are like giant sentinels to guard it.

*Wednesday evening, top of Mount Righi.*—I must write a line to you to-night, though in a *salle-à-manger* crowded with French, German, Swiss, English, all talking together, in a hotel on the summit of the Righi, six thousand one hundred and fifty-six feet above the sea, and four thousand five hundred above Switz. The peculiarity of this mountain is not so much its great height, as the accessible and yet commanding point in which it terminates, which gives it, when the weather is clear, one of the noblest and most extensive views in the world: the consequence is,

that almost every traveller ascends it. It is not the road to any town, as the other Alps I have crossed are, but an insulated spot, which has become celebrated from the comparative easiness of the approach. The moment a fine day appears all the world hurry forwards to the only inn and only house on the extreme summit of this vast elevation.

The scene at the table-d'hôte is comic beyond description. We were between five and six hours coming up the mountain, in many parts by stairs so steep, that we ascended at a rate of forty feet in a hundred. The heat added to the fatigue, but the extraordinary scene, now we are at the top, surpasses all my conceptions, even of what Switzerland could produce. The eye has an unimpeded view all around. It is a sort of natural panorama. The main disadvantage (which yet adds, perhaps, to the interest of the excursion) is the uncertainty of finding a bright, unclouded sky at this great elevation: either the valleys or the tops of the mountains are commonly obscured with a dark mantle of clouds. As we were at supper we were hurried out to ascend a wooden platform, forty or fifty feet high, raised on the edge of the precipice, to behold a gathering storm. We were astonished at the sublime sight. One quarter of the horizon was illuminated with the setting sun in the softest beauty, whilst in another quarter the most gloomy storm shrouded with all its horrors the tops of the adjoining mountains, and was approaching the Righi—but I must absolutely stop.

*Righi, five o'clock, Thursday morning.*—I was compelled to break off last night by the excessive noise in the dining hall: I had half a dozen people talking to me at once, and therefore was soon wearied out, and retired to rest. My friend and I were crowded into a small room, the feet of our beds touching each other; presently the house became more noisy than ever with the company going to their chambers, (for these wooden houses shake at every step,) and soon after, the storm which was lowering in the evening, began to descend—the lightning, thunder, and rain were tremendous; I really thought the house would have fallen. It is now five in the morning, and the rain and the brouillard completely obscure the whole scene; nevertheless all the house is in motion, and families are going down the hill. Fifty-one persons slept here last night—twenty-four gentry; twenty-seven servants and guides; in the course of yesterday, there had been fifty-two gentry.—The house is very small. I find a New Testament of the Bible Society in this Catholic solitude, with an inscription to state that it was left by Messrs. Treutell and Wurtz, "for the use of Christians whom the bad weather might prevent from seeing and admiring the great work of the creation, and adoring the Creator, by mounting towards him by the help of his works." In the strangers' book I was startled to see the name of his present majesty, George IV., who assuredly never ascended this mountain.

When the weather is fine, fourteen lakes are visible here, and the sun rising upon the range of the Alps is magnificent. They may be traced from the Glarnish on the east, to the Oberland Bernois on the southwest; whilst on the north,



your eye may range from the lake of Constance to that of Neuchâtel. All Switzerland, to the east and north, is open before you; and much further, into Suabia. The only hill we could distinguish last night was Mount Pilate, which is called properly Mons Pileatus, or Mountain with a Cap, because a cloud generally rests on its extreme top, even in the finest weather. The common people say that Pontius Pilate came here and threw himself down the precipice in despair, for having condemned our Saviour.

As the morning is so unfavorable, and breakfast is not ready, I must tell you a sad story.—As we ascended the Righi yesterday, we passed over the melancholy ruins of the village of Goldau. In 1806 an immense mass of earth from the Rossberg, gradually loosened by two or three months' rain, fell down with scarcely a moment's warning: it was the 2d of September; four villages, of which Goldau was the chief, lay at the foot of the mountain. All was buried in an instant—two churches, one hundred and eleven houses, two hundred barns, &c., and four hundred persons, with three hundred and twenty-five head of cattle, were overwhelmed; and a new ruinous mountain, one hundred and fifty feet high, was formed by the vast mass. The loss was estimated at three million eight hundred and forty thousand livres of France.

Those who had been aware of the dangerous state of the mountain, and the probability of some disaster, were not warned in time. Two old inhabitants who had predicted the calamity, when some one rushed into their cottage, and told them the rock was actually falling, disbelieved the message, and were lost. A party of ten persons had been two months waiting for fine weather to visit Mount Righi. They set off for Switz the day of the catastrophe; five of them staid a moment behind the rest, to take some provisions; the instant the others entered Goldau, the enormous ruin carried them away.

A physician from the neighboring village of Arth, Dr. Zay, has published an account of the calamity. During the whole day the air was darkened with clouds of rock and earth. Entire forests, and large blocks of the mountain, were borne through the air as swiftly as an arrow.—Houses, cattle, men, all were dragged along, and seemed to fly in the midst of the heavens. Several females and children were almost miraculously preserved. Two women were forced into a pit fifteen feet deep, and thus escaped. A maid servant, Jeanne Ulrich, with Marianne, a little girl five years old, were overwhelmed. The maid was torn from the child, and hung suspended among beams of wood and ruins, which crushed her on all sides. Her eyes were filled with blood. She thought the last day was come, and betook herself to prayer. She heard the cries of the child. Two hours passed; a neighboring church clock struck, but no help arrived. The cries of the child became fainter and fainter, and at last ceased.—The girl, thinking she was dead, made desperate efforts to liberate herself, and at last freed her legs from the mass of ruins. Soon the little Marianne began again to cry; she had fallen asleep, and on waking renewed her lamentations. Two hours more elapsed, when the child's parent, Viguet, who had carried his two sons to a place of

safety, returned to deliver the rest of his family. He searched amongst the sad remains of his house; a foot appeared above the ruins; he approached, he recognised a part of his wife's dress; he uttered the most piercing lamentations, which reached the ears of the servant and Marianne, who instantly redoubled their cries. The father knew his child's voice, and rescued her with only a broken limb. The maid was afterwards taken out, scarcely alive. They both recovered.

It is remarkable, that in this very neighborhood, an entire street of Zug, with a part of the towers and walls of the town, sunk, without a moment's warning, into the lake, in the year 1435. Sixty persons then perished. The infant son of the keeper of the archives, Adelrich Wikard, who was found floating in his cradle on the waters, was rescued, and became afterwards the father of a family which deserved well of the state.

O God, how unfathomable are thy judgments! thus is it that thou alarmest a sleeping world, and callest man to prepare for sudden death, and sudden judgment; whilst the grace of thy Gospel sets before them a dying Saviour, whose redemption no falling rocks nor sudden destruction can overwhelm; nay, which will appear most glorious "when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the earth shall melt with fervent heat!"

It is astonishing and terrific as you ride over the place where Goldau stood; the ruins are above one hundred feet deep; the adjoining lake of Lowertz was filled up for fifty feet. Many persons beheld the ruin from the top of the Righi; and were compelled to witness the destruction of their own lands and houses, without the possibility of giving any aid. Only a few bodies and mangled limbs have been dug up after seventeen years. Such was the tremendous impetus of the falling rock, that prodigious masses were carried by the rebound many hundred feet up the opposite hill, i. e. perhaps three or four leagues from the summit whence they fell. Such a scene I never witnessed. Still, the love of their native spot is so deeply fixed in the Swiss, that two or three new houses are beginning to rise in the midst of the ruins. One of the churches has been rebuilt; the grass is now hiding by degrees the frightful spectacle, and even some strips of meadows are forming here and there.

*Righi, 10 o'clock.*—The morning is actually clearing up.

*Eleven o'clock.*—No: all our hopes are disappointed; the valley is filled with clouds; fogs are rising and covering every thing with one mantle of deep and impenetrable obscurity. Thus we shall be compelled to leave this queen of mountains without seeing all its magnificence of prospect. I may as well tell you, before I lay by my letter, that in coming up yesterday, we visited the convent of St. Mary in the Snow, four thousand two hundred feet above the sea, where a small convent of Capuchin friars, for receiving strangers, is supported. The little church adjoining is curiously adorned; and in the small village two inns have been built within three years.

In the strangers' book on Mount Righi, I find so many fictions, that I have now no difficulty in accounting for the insertion of the name of the king; but I have called in all the people of the

house and examined them, and they stoutly affirm that our king was here, and wrote with his own hand his name and date, October, 1816, and that he came with three ladies and four gentlemen in his suite. Such is the vanity of these good people!

Perhaps I cannot employ myself better than by going on to say, that the keeping of a strangers' book is one of those foreign customs which one cannot but approve of. It is, perhaps, a little galling at first to an Englishman, to be obliged to put down his name, age, country, family, time of arrival, place of destination, motives of journey, &c., as soon as he drives into a town. But the pleasure is so great to see what countrymen or friends are before you on the road, and to look back and read the names of travellers in past years, that you are soon delighted with the plan. In frontier towns the book is often under the regulation of the police; but in small towns in the interior, and places of fashionable resort, as the fall of the Rhine, Mount Righi, &c., it partakes more of the nature of an album, in which travellers write down any sentiments they please, together with their names. Sometimes an opinion is given of the country they have passed through, or advice as to inns and roads; at other times a short poetical effusion is inserted, or a stroke of wit and drollery. You meet occasionally with very admirable thoughts, and bursts of real genius. My friend transcribed a striking copy of verses. It is curious even to look over the hand-writing of celebrated individuals. The strangers' book, further, enables you to compare the number of travellers from different countries. I counted once or twice, and found the English four or five times as numerous as those of any other nation. It is much to be regretted, that the unpardonable license of a few persons, I am afraid chiefly Englishmen, is rapidly tending to put an end to this innocent and gratifying custom, or at least to the confining of it to the dry record of the police towns.

*Righi, twelve o'clock.*—We are in as miserable a plight as ever poor creatures were: a dreadful wet day—shut up in a close room, as in a prison—scarcely able to breathe—five or six leagues to reach Lucern—no prospect—nothing but rain and fog. Some of the party are endeavoring to throw a ring, suspended by a cord from the ceiling, upon a hook fixed at a suitable distance in the wall of the room—a trait of genuine ennui.

For my own part, I have been amusing myself with talking with two Italian gentlemen—well informed—admirers of England—discontented with their existing government—ready for change—with no great attachment to Popery; really this is the case with all the foreigners we meet. Tyranny, in a day of general information, galls the mind, and defeats, and must defeat, its own purpose. I endeavor to give the best advice I can; dwelling chiefly on the importance of the Scriptures, and the elevating nature of true Christianity. I have been deeply interested also, with two students from St. Petersburg—amiable, scholar-like young men; they spent last winter in England. I shall not soon forget their surprise, when they happened to discover who I was. They had frequently heard me preach in London. The meeting thus with occasional auditors, on a sudden, in the heart of Switzerland, appals me.

I feel, as it were, quite uncomfortable, lest I should have failed in giving them a faithful impression of the Gospel of Christ; and yet, if these young Russians have heard me, so may others from other lands. What a responsible office is that of the sacred ministry! What diligence, what solicitude, what uprightness, what simplicity in following the Holy Scriptures, what humility and fervor in imploring the grace of the sacred Comforter, does it require!

*Lucern, Friday morning, seven o'clock.*—We arrived here last night; the weather a little cleared up after dinner yesterday at the Righi, and at two we mounted our beasts to descend; three hours brought us to Küssnacht, a town on the lake of Lucern; and three hours more to this town. The weather was rainy, but still tolerable. The views of the surrounding country, as we came down, were lovely: we had the lakes of Lucern and Zug full before us. The road from Küssnacht was positively through a garden, by the side of the lake, with just those gentle rises which gave us the sweetest views imaginable.

We have now finished our Oberland tour of two hundred and forty-nine miles; only it happens, that we are landed at a town nearly seventy miles from Bern, and have thus two days' journey to reach my dear family. We visited yesterday a third chapel of William Tell, built by the government, on the spot where he slew Gesler the Austrian governor. So that there is a tower, as I have before mentioned, at Altorf, on the place where William Tell's child stood with the apple on his head; a fountain where the father stood; a chapel on the site of his house at Burglen; a second where he escaped from the boat conducting him to prison; a third where he slew the oppressor of his country; and another where the oath of confederation was taken at Grutli—at this last place, an English wag has written on the wall, "Cato street conspirators!" Thus is the love of liberty nourished in the breasts of this fine people: Catholics and Protestants seem the same in this respect. There is a public spirit, a hardy courage, a patriotism, an independence of mind, about the Swiss, connected with a ready subjection to lawful authority, and a sense of moral and religious obligation, which are the true foundations of national prosperity. Their adherence to all their ancient usages, even in their dress, is observable; each canton has its costume. At Switz, the women have caps with two high white frills, plaited, and standing nearly erect on their heads, like two butterfly's wings; quite different from the Bernois, yet equally fantastical and inconvenient.

This Oberland country has, on the whole, filled me with wonder, astonishment, and gratitude. "How glorious, O God, are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep." O that, in this glorious creation, man did but love and obey Thee as he ought!

Lucern, where we now are, is the capital of the canton, and romantically situated on the north-west banks of the lake of four cantons. It is just in the heart of Switzerland. It is one thousand three hundred and twenty feet above the sea. The fine river Reuss crosses it, over which there are three bridges. The name is probably derived



from the Latin word, *Lucerna*, a lamp or light-house; as the most ancient building is the great tower where the light was formerly suspended; possibly in the time of the Romans. It contains six thousand souls. It is the great mart of commerce between Switzerland and northern Italy, the road over St. Gothard beginning at Altorf, the other side the lake. The Catholic religion is here prevalent; so that all up mount Righi we found stations and crucifixes for pilgrims. Many of the priests are said to be men of piety and information, and to have been on the point of embracing Protestantism a few years back. Some political events unhappily interfered to delay the execution of this good design.

In these free states, a reformation may be effected with comparative ease, if once the minds of the leading magistrates and clergy are duly informed and impressed with divine truth. They depend on no foreign potentate. A majority of the senate determines all questions. What they once resolve on, they never want courage to perform. It was thus that the reformed doctrines were received at Zurich, Bern, &c. in the sixteenth century. The German language prevails through the *Oberland*; so that I have had no great means of gaining information on the general state of morals and religion. I can speak indeed of particular facts which fall under my own observation; but when I come to reflections on a whole canton, I remember the diffidence which becomes a stranger on such subjects. Still, I cannot but avow, that the general appearance of these Catholic cantons is strongly against them; whilst in Bern all is industry and cleanliness, and not a beggar to be seen.

*Zofingen, thirty miles from Lucern, half-past nine, Friday night.*—While supper is preparing, I will write something of the occurrences of a most delightful day. After breakfast this morning, we went to see a model of Lucern and the neighboring country, on a scale of about thirteen inches to a league. It was most gratifying to trace out part of the tour we had just made. Our attendant pointed out the model of one Alp, the *Titlis*, on which the ice lies one hundred and seventy-five feet thick in summer. General Pfyffer spent his life in traversing the mountains, and executing this model. A portrait of him, in his travelling dress, adorns the room; and his camp-seat, of a most simple but admirable contrivance, was shown us. We next visited the arsenal, and saw the sword of *Zuingli*, the Reformer, (for he was compelled, by the law of the republic, to bear arms, and he fell on the field of *Capelle*, in 1531;)\* and then the Jesuits' church and the cathedral, where the tawdry ornaments and superstitious

images of the Virgin re-awakened that pain of mind which the Protestant cantons had soothed. A noble monument just erected to the Swiss regiment, who perished at Paris, in defending Louis XVI., August 10, 1792, very much interested us; it is a lion, 28 feet long, cut out in the rock, and the names of the officers inscribed beneath.

The three covered bridges in the town are surprising structures; the first, that of the Court, is one thousand four hundred feet long; the second, one thousand one hundred; in the spaces between the beams of the first there are two hundred and thirty-eight paintings from the Old and New Testament; and of the second, one hundred and fifty-four from the lives of the heroes and saints of Switzerland. A third bridge has thirty-six pictures from Holbein's Dance of Death. The river *Reuss* is here of a deep blue-green color, very rapid, and so clear that you may count the stones at the bottom. We ascended two hills which commanded magnificent views of the town, the lake, the adjoining hills, and distant Alps: perfectly enchanting.

*Zofingen, Saturday morning.*—It was eleven o'clock before we were in bed last night; the fact is, we spent all the morning in seeing Lucern, and had a journey of six hours and a half to take after three o'clock, in order to reach Bern by Saturday night. I have only further to say about Lucern, that the views from the bridges and the neighboring hills are some of the very finest in Switzerland. Zurich and Lucern are the most enchanting towns we have seen. The road hither ran by the side of the lake of *Sempach*; but by seven the evening came on, and we could see little of the prospect; a fine moon-light, however, aided us. At the town of *Sursee*, whilst we were taking some refreshment, I saw a portrait of *Père Girard* of *Fribourg*. The son of the aubergiste had been his scholar: I sent for the boy in. He had been five years at school—seemed a fine, clever lad—spoke in the highest terms of *M. Girard*. He tells me, *M. G.* had five classes, and four or five hundred children, at *Fribourg*; and that he gave lectures on the catechism, and taught the children the New Testament. He was, in truth, too good for the Papists;—they raised an opposition—the Jesuits aided—and *Père Girard's* whole establishment is now broken up. This aubergiste had sent his son fifty-five miles to this good school-master. These individual cases of piety and zeal continually occur. The intrepidity and faith of such men are of a character which we have little conception of in England, surrounded by Protestant connections and protected by Protestant laws. Surely charity should peculiarly rejoice in such triumphs of the grace of God, in the midst of the corruptions of Popery.

\*I cannot but just add here, that undoubtedly there was too much of secular politics mixed up with the higher principles of the Swiss Reformers. An interference with the temporal governments proved one very lamentable impediment to the advance of the Reformation. The character of Luther stands pre-eminent, above all the Reformers, in this respect. His wisdom, spirituality of mind, subjection to "the powers that be, as ordained of God," and moderation on doubtful points, (except in the sacramentarian controversy,) placed him on an elevation, to which I am not aware that any of his contemporaries can

be raised. Religion was with him a matter of the heart, and the reformed doctrines the consolation of his aroused and most tender conscience; and all this in a very peculiar degree. Others may have had more learning, as *Melancthon*; or more acuteness, as *Calvin* or *Zuingli*; but for deep, affecting views of religion, superiority to secular politics, and experience of inward temptations, united with magnanimity of mind, and uncommon powers of eloquence, none can be compared, I think, with *Martin Luther*.

The town of Zofingen is in Argovie, and is Protestant; it contains about two thousand souls. A house was destroyed by lightning, in the storm of Wednesday night. The women in Lucern wear, not caps, but immense straw hats, with very small flat crowns, and four bows of ribbon, two green and two red, with sometimes a bunch of flowers. Our voiturier (for we were obliged to hire one at Lucern to take us back to Bern) feeds his horses with bread; when we stopped yesterday, we saw a boy with a loaf of bread, (of the same sort as we had ourselves,) cutting it with a knife, and giving first one horse a slice, and then another, which they seemed to eat with much pleasure.

*Herzogenbuchs, seventeen miles from Zofingen, twelve at noon.*—We have had a pleasing drive of four hours through a fruitful country. The village is neat and clean, and the whole place is crowded with men and women who have been attending a funeral, and are now going to dinner. We are in a Protestant canton, and within seven leagues of Bern. The village contains about five hundred inhabitants; two or three hundred of whom are dining, or about to dine, at this funeral.

*Bern, Saturday evening, half-past seven.*—Thank God, I find myself again with my dear Ann; and thank God also she is remarkably well. The fortnight's entire quiet, though dull to her in some respects, has restored her to wonderful health and strength. She has also now become accustomed to the food and place, and knows better what she is about, and how to manage the people and things in Switzerland. How great a blessing is this! We had a beautiful ride from Herzogenbuchs to Bern, twenty-one miles. Almost all the country from Lucern to Bern is well cultivated, the views beautifully mild, herds of cattle feeding in different spots, the meadows yielding four or five crops a year, the farming buildings large and convenient—the whole reminding us of beloved England—which could not, of course, be the case in the mountain regions we have left. As we approached Bern, a noble range of Alps stretched themselves before us. We passed Hofwyl, the celebrated spot where M. Fellenberg has his school and his establishment for agriculturists; but it was too late to stop.

We have been, in this Oberland tour, three hundred and fifteen miles in twelve days, and above two hundred of it on mules. Never did I derive so much benefit to my health, as by these mountain rides. We propose now to go on to Lausanne on Monday. We shall set off for Paris (please God) by the 1st of October, at latest; stay there till the 23d, and be at home on Friday the 31st. I had the particular pleasure of finding a letter from you, dated August 6th, and received August 21st, on my return here. Your account of our dear relative grieves me to the heart. My prayers shall be united with yours, that these severe and repeated afflictions may become real blessings to him, by awakening him to more seriousness, determination, and earnestness, in seeking the salvation of his soul, which is the grand concern of man, and without which we are lost and miserable, though in the utmost outward prosperity.

*Bern, Sunday evening, August 24, 1823.*—We have had to-day a delightful Sunday; twice have I not only attended public worship, (which we

always do,) but heard “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,” as St. Paul expressed it, from the lips of his ministers. The difference between a cold harangue on ethics, and the gracious message of peace and joy in Christ Jesus, is immense. Duty must follow, not precede, much less exclude, salvation by faith. The morning subject was John, v. 44. “How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?”—the afternoon, Heb. x. The church was crowded in the morning, and the attention of the congregation most pleasing. Notice was given of a public fast for Sept. 11, “On account of the sins of the people, and in order to render thanks to God for his benefits.” The language of the notice was very pious and appropriate. After recounting the various public blessings of Almighty God to the republic of Bern, it proceeded to mention “the most excellent of all God’s gifts, the holy religion of Jesus, which is an inexhaustible source of truth, virtue, and consolation, to so many thousands of souls.” It then dwelt on the ingratitude and sins of the people, and exhorted them “to fly to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, and seek from Him the pardon of their sins by unfeigned repentance, a lively faith, and a true conversion.” It ordered, lastly, that all the shops should be shut after three o’clock the preceding day.

At half-past four we had our private service. Three English families joined us; so that we were eighteen in all. I was not in the least acquainted even with the names of my auditory; but an opportunity occurring, I had just mentioned to two families, at the table-d’hôte, that I was about to have English service; and, as we were beginning, a third family, a clergyman’s, begged permission to come in. They all seemed intensely attentive. My subject was from 1 Thess. i. 5, “For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” I hope some good was done. One family was, at the least, better employed than on the preceding Sunday, when they were at a play at Lausanne. This the father of it had told me with perfect sangfroid; adding, that he had been properly punished; for they were late, and could obtain no good sittings. It was this conversation which led me to propose to them to join our English service. How lamentable is it that British travellers have so slight a sense of the obligation of keeping holy the Sabbath!

So far as I can learn, there is much of true religion in this important canton. It quite delights me to be able to say this. I have so often had to give you unfavorable accounts, that I have a double pleasure, when truth allows me to unite with *charity* in my reports. The education of the children is strictly attended to—indeed every parent is compelled to send his children to school and catechism. In this respect the Swiss governments possess a real moral power. In the police of the towns; the suppression of vice; the prohibition of theatres; the banishing of bad persons at once, and without ceremony; the laws against luxury, &c.; it is amazing what a salutary influence some of these states exercise over their comparatively diminutive territories.

The town of Bern contains about a ninth part



of the population of Liverpool or Manchester; and all the canton not a fourth part of the population of London—indeed the twenty-two Swiss cantons are not much more populous than that one immense city.\* Every thing therefore falls immediately under the notice of the magistrates, and may be checked at its first appearance. And this sort of paternal, though perhaps somewhat arbitrary, restraint, being connected generally with the faithful preaching of the Gospel, all seems to be done, that any government can do, for the suppression of public immorality and the encouragement of piety and virtue.

Whereas in England things are on a very different footing. The overgrown population of the metropolis, the extent of the other commercial towns and cities, the jealousy of their civil rights which pervades all ranks, the measure of political and religious liberty which they claim and enjoy, the influence of public opinion on parliament and ministers of state, the tone of religious sentiment given by the bishops and clergy, all combine to prevent the interference of an arbitrary discipline, and to leave things at the disposal of law and the general feelings of the nation. Undoubtedly this has degenerated too often into negligence and disorder, especially in the permission of blasphemous and seditious publications, in the neglect of the education of our poor, and the inadequate provision for the public worship of God. Nor has the faithful preaching of the reformed doctrines in their simplicity and vigor, been always so general with us, as it seems to have been in the Swiss churches.

Still, in England there is a principle of renovation implanted, and concealed, as it were, in all our free institutions, which revives whenever the mercy of God visits our country, and which was never, perhaps, more powerfully at work than at present. The standard of religious sentiment is rapidly advancing, our clergy are rising from their torpor, and are preaching and living according to the Gospel; the influence of public sentiment is turned, in a considerable degree, to the side of piety and good morals; our government favors the progress of this mighty change; Parliament itself begins to move; our Bible and missionary institutions are in some proportion to our wealth and commercial greatness. Now, in the small governments of Switzerland, I suspect that much more must depend on the personal character of the members of the government, and much less on public opinion. And if a spirit of negligence as to morals, or of persecution as to religion, should pervade the minds of the chief persons in a canton, there would be far less hope of a recovery than in England.

But I am indulging too much in this sort of reflections, for a stranger; the state of things in the canton of Bern is at present delightful; and, after all, under every form of government, the extent of real spiritual religion in the heart and life, must ever depend on a higher cause—the pure preaching of the doctrine of Christ, and the grace of God's blessed Spirit. May that grace descend more and more on our own happy country and all

Christian nations and churches, yea, on all mankind!

I am your affectionate brother, D. W.

P. S. As I have been speaking on the subject of strangers' books, I cannot close my letter without mentioning the two ingenious sentences which were written in the time of our James I. by the celebrated Sir Henry Wotton, whose advice to Milton I noticed in a former letter.

The first is a keen satire; and would have been more complete if the ambiguity of the English word, lie, could have been expressed in the Latin:

"An ambassador is an honest man sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country."—"Legatus est vir bonus peregrè missus ad mentiendum re-publicæ causâ."

The other is more grave, but not without a touch of humor; for I suppress the long solemn list of Sir Henry's titles, and of his various embassies, which precedes it:

"Henricus Wottonius, &c. &c. &c. tandem hoc didicit, Animas fieri sapientiores quiescendo."—"Henry Wotton, &c. &c. &c. at length learned this, That souls are made wiser by being quiet."

The first was written early in Sir Henry's life, and was printed from the Latin copy, eight years afterwards, and maliciously transcribed on several glass windows at Venice, where he then resided as English Ambassador. The other was the cool and weighty result of experience, after a long life spent in diplomatic services.

I wish all the sentences written now were as well worth remembering.

#### NOTICE OF THE PUBLIC FAST AT BERN.

This public religious service is annual in the Swiss churches, and is attended to with much solemnity by all classes. Surely other churches might do well to imitate so good an example.—What cause have we in England, at the time I am writing this, (February, 1825) for thanksgiving as well as for humiliation—for *thanksgiving* on account of the unnumbered blessings which God has vouchsafed to us; blessings almost unparalleled in the history of nations—for *humiliation* on account of our, alas! too flagrant and aggravated national sins. Surely the growing sense of religious obligation which marks the general body of people in England, would support the venerable heads of our church in so seasonable an appointment. The highest pitch of public prosperity always touches on the most fearful reverses, by leading to pride, luxury, vice, and forgetfulness of God. I insert the whole of the valuable document from which I have given a passage or two above. I never saw a copy of it in this country.

*Nous avoyer et conseil de la ville et republique de Bern, assurons nos chers et fidèles ressortissants de notre gracieuse bienveillance, et leur faisons savoir:*

Que, de concert avec les autres Etats réformés de la Confédération, nous avons arrêté de faire célébrer, Jeudi 11 Septembre prochain, un jour solennel d'actions de grâces, de jeûne et de prière.

\* Switzerland contains 1,750,000 inhabitants; London, 1,274,800; Bern 13,340; Liverpool, 118,972; the canton of Bern, 215,000

Et qui de nous, chers et fidèles ressortissans, ne se sentirait avec nous porté à remercier Dieu publiquement, et du fond d'un cœur touché, en réfléchissant à tous les bienfaits qu'il a répandus sur nous pendant cette année si pleine d'événemens ! Une paix profonde régnait au sein de notre patrie, et dans les contrées qui nous avoisinent ; tandis que dans d'autres pays plus éloignés le fléau de la guerre trouble la prospérité des peuples : et de cette tranquillité découlaient pour la vie domestique et publique d'inombrables bénédictions qui s'étendent sur tous les états et sur tous les âges. La terre a été fertile au-delà de toute espérance, et par ses riches productions a confondu les inquiétudes de ceux, auxquels la température variable et pluvieuse de l'été faisait craindre le retour de la disette. Et si par-ci par-là des orages ont occasionné quelque perte, que ce dommage est peu de chose en comparaison de tout le bien que nous avons reçue de la main du Seigneur ! ce n'a été en quelque sorte qu'un avertissement pour nous rappeler qu'il est en sa puissance de nous donner ou de nous enlever ce qui nous est le plus nécessaire.

Et pourquoi ne ferions-nous pas mention du plus excellent de tous les dons de Dieu, de la sainte religion de Jésus, qui est enseignée purement dans les églises et dans les écoles, et qui est une source intarissable de vérité, de vertu, et de consolation pour tant de milliers d'âmes ?

Si l'expérience journalière de cette grâce du Seigneur qui se multiplie sur nous de tant de manières, doit à juste titre nous animer à la célébrer avec joie ; nous ne saurions cependant vous le cacher, un regard jeté sur l'état religieux et moral de notre peuple, dévoile une grande corruption, qui en vérité nous rend indignes d'une telle grâce. Une légèreté sans bornes se manifeste dans les villes et à la campagne sous une multitude de formes ; dans l'indifférence touchant la connaissance et l'adoration de Dieu, chez plusieurs dans un total abandon des temples du Seigneur, dans l'oisiveté, le goût du luxe, et une vie déréglée, qui entraînent la ruine de familles entières, comme aussi des individus en particulier. Et à côté de cette déplorable et criminelle légèreté, n'avons-nous pas la douleur de voir dans quelques contrées des hommes pervers continuer à faire un horrible abus des choses divines, de tout ce qu'il y a de plus saint, pour tromper les simples, pour séduire les faibles, et se livrer à la plus grossière immoralité ? Des iniquités aussi graves ayant lieu, ainsi que tant d'autres transgressions qui minent insensiblement la prospérité publique et domestique ; le soin paternel que nous devons prendre du salut de nos ressortissans nous oblige à les exhorter sérieusement, de recourir à la grâce de Dieu en Jésus Christ, et de chercher auprès de lui le pardon des péchés par une repentance non feinte, une foi vive, et une conversion véritable, se rappelant soigneusement qu'il ne faut pas s'en tenir à la simple promesse de s'amender, mais que le sacrifice agréable au Très-Haut, c'est une vie Chrétienne selon la vérité, la pureté, et la charité,

Nous attendons avec confiance, que quiconque désire le bien de la patrie, et son propre avantage, ne manquera pas au jour de jeûne prochain, d'implorer pour cet effet de l'amour éternel le secours d'en haut, et la conservation des biens précieux dont nous jouissons.

Mais pour prévenir autant que possible tout ce qui pourrait troubler la dévotion pendant ce jour solennel de jeûne, nous ordonnons enfin sérieusement, que durant tout ce saint jour, et la veille depuis les trois heures de l'après-dîner, toutes les auberges et pintes soient fermées pour chacun, excepté pour les voyageurs étrangers ; nous défendons en même temps les courses indécentes d'une paroisse dans une autre, et entendons que chacun fréquente l'église de sa paroisse.

Veuille l'Auteur de toute grâce lui-même faire servir cette institution à sa sainte gloire, à la prospérité de la patrie, et à l'avancement du bonheur de chacun en particulier.

Donné le 18 Août, 1823.

*Chancellerie de Berne.*

## LETTER X.

*Morat, August 25.—Lausanne, August 31, 1823.*

Battle of Morat—Avenche—Payerne—Lausanne—Reformation—Translation of Scott—Lake of Geneva—Lodgings—Calvinism—Nion—Coppet—M. Neckar—Madam de Stael—Geneva—Rhône—Steam Boat—Death of Missionaries Johnson and Palmer—The Pope—Ferne—Voltaire—Sunday at Lausanne—Preachers—Persecution—Calvin's Will—Arrete at Lausanne.

*Morat, canton of Friburg, 15 miles from Bern, Monday, August 25, 1823.*

MY DEAREST SISTER,—At length we have left Bern, eighteen days after our arrival. We have been driving to-day through a sweet country, though of necessity less striking than the Oberland, which still captivates my imagination. On reflection, I feel more and more gratified at having had health and strength to visit it. The Jungfrau, the Avalanches, the Giessbach, the Glacier of the Rhone, and the valley of the Reuss, seem quite to fill and overwhelm my mind. Even the Righi, bad as the weather was, has left a strong impression on my recollection. Next to a perfectly clear day, I conceive nothing could have been finer than the beholding the tremendous storm gathering in the horizon, hours before it burst upon us, contrasted with the sweet sunshine on the opposite side. I must tell you, that good old Mr. Wytttenbach called on us before we left Bern, and gave us his blessing : and that three young ladies out of our congregation yesterday, seemed a good deal affected with the discourse ; they spoke to us this morning with evident interest and anxiety. It is impossible to reckon on the impressions made by a single sermon ; but attention to truth is always a hopeful sign, and may lead on to consideration, repentance, conversion ; —“faith cometh by hearing.”

It is, perhaps, scarcely worth adding to what I have said about Bern, that the founder of the town was a duke of Zähringen. He is represented over one of the gates, in a colossal form, twenty feet or more high. In all these towns and cantons, you should know, that the walks and varied beauties of nature are opened to the public, and you are sure to find shady paths and convenient



seats for your repose; nothing is usurped as of private use. I forgot to say, that at Lucern, all the dogs in the town are secured with muzzles of brass or iron, placed loosely over the mouth; nothing could be more curious, than to meet ten or twelve of these poor animals in every street, thus deprived of liberty.

Morat, where we now are dining, is beautifully situated on the lake of that name; it is one thousand four hundred and sixty feet above the sea, and has a thousand inhabitants. It is celebrated for one of those great battles, by which a small number of Swiss heroes overcame France and Austria, and established their independence. The battle of Morat was fought June 22, 1476, against Charles duke of Burgundy. Two thousand heroes kept an army of seventy thousand French in check, at Morat, till the Swiss confederates could arrive—Couriers were despatched in all directions to hasten their march—In three weeks thirty-five thousand men were collected—They at once resolved to attack the enemy's camp, and they gained a complete victory. Three-and-twenty thousand of Charles's army perished on that day; and the duke escaped with difficulty, with three thousand cavalry, to Morges. The Swiss loss was four hundred killed, and six hundred wounded.

The lake of Morat, is only six miles long, and two broad; but abounds in a fish called *sabet*, said to be the largest of all the fresh water kinds. We have had a fearfully hot ride of four hours and a half. This is the fourth fine day we have had in succession.

*Payerne, Canton de Vaud, half-past nine, Monday night.*—We left Morat at half-past six, and soon came to the spot where the battle of Morat was fought. A building formerly stood there, forty-four feet by fourteen, containing the bones of the Burgundians who fell, with this truly Swiss inscription: "The army of Charles, duke of Burgundy, besieging Morat, was slain by the Swiss, and left behind them this monument, in 1476"—"hoc sui monumentum reliquit." The building was destroyed by the French, in 1798. A new and simple column was erected last year, with this inscription, "Victoriam, 22 Jun. 1476, patrum concordia partam, novo signat lapide Republica Fribourg, 1822." "The victory obtained by the union of their forefathers, 22d June, 1476, is marked with a new column by the Republic of Fribourg, 1822—a simple and sublime record!

About half-past seven we passed through Avenche, the ancient Aventicum, founded 589 years before Christ, and a most flourishing city and a capital of Helvetia, under the emperor Vespasian, from A. D. 69—77. It was destroyed by Attila in the fifth century. We saw the ruins of the Roman tower, walls, amphitheatre, altars, temples; and drove for a mile over what formerly constituted Aventicum. An inconsiderable village is all that now remains of what was once the metropolis of Switzerland. Thus the glory of cities passes away. The spot abounds with ancient inscriptions; one is too curious to be omitted. Tacitus relates, that Julius Alpinus, chief magistrate of Aventicum, was massacred by order of Aulus Cæcina, in the year 69; in spite of the prayers of his daughter. An inscription has been found in the antiquities of the town, which

remarkably confirms this historical fact. It is an epitaph, most simple and touching, on this very daughter, and supposed to be written by herself. "I, Julia Alpinula, here lie, the unhappy offspring of an unhappy father. I could not avert by my entreaties the death of my father; the fates had appointed him an evil death. I lived XXIII. years."\* It is thus that incidental circumstances corroborate the truth of history. The Scripture annals have been confirmed a thousand times in a similar manner; and though they embrace a period of several thousand years, and touch on the history of all countries, and have lain open to the misrepresentations of unbelievers in every age, nothing has ever been established to weaken their authenticity.

*Moudon, Tuesday morning, August 26.*—We set off this morning at half-past eight. Before breakfast, we went to see the church of Payerne, where there is a tomb of queen Bertha, who built, in 962, the cathedral, from the ruins of Avenche; the edifice is now used as a barn. We saw also, the curious saddle which she used, made of wood cased with iron, and with a high framework, like a child's go-cart, so as to defend and fix the whole body. We are now at a small town called Moudon, twelve miles from Payerne—one thousand four hundred souls—built by the Romans, on the Broie river, which joins the lakes of Morat and Neuchâtel. The country here is much more tame than in the Oberland (indeed you must expect dull letters after the wonders of the Alps,) but still fruitful, variegated, agreeable.

Now let me answer your inquiries about the beds in the Pays Bas and Germany (for my letters are miscellanies indeed:) 1st. We were in danger of rolling out, from the inclined, shelving form of the high, thick, awkward, trebled mattresses; the beds inclined both from one side to the other, and from the head to the foot. 2d. If you kept in bed, then you were in danger of losing all the scanty clothes at once, by the slightest change of position. 3d. If you laid hold of the clothes to prevent this, then you infallibly uncovered your feet; and in rising to adjust the clothes, the whole bed became deranged. 4th. When other things were settled, you had to search about with your hands in the straw of the mattresses, and push down some of the principal bumps as well as you could. 5th. The curtains being suspended on a ring or hoop, from the top of the room (the beds having no posts), you were in danger of pulling down the whole canopy upon you, if you drew the curtains round you. 6th. All these dangers being over, you were exposed every minute, till the house was quiet, to persons of all descriptions coming into your room; for the lock would sometimes not turn, and you had no bolts. Then, 7th. The servants knew not one word of French; and, lastly, the beds themselves were so small, and so beset with hard wooden sides and ends, that you were infallibly exposed to injuring your hands, or arms, or head, by violent blows. Now we are in Switzerland, the beds are generally better.

\* "Julia Alpinula hic jaceo infelicis patris infelix proles. Exorare patris necem non potui; male mori in fati illi erat. Vixi annos, XXIII."—Grut. Inscript. Tac. Hist. L. 1 et 2.

*Lausanne, capital of Pays de Vaud, Tuesday night.*—We arrived here at eight o'clock. The drive of twelve miles was fine and beautiful. We crossed Mount Jorat, two thousand seven hundred and seventy feet above the sea. The mountains on the other side of the lake of Geneva were clearly visible; but Mount Blanc (the great popular curiosity of Switzerland, or Savoy, properly speaking) was obscured with clouds. As we approached Lausanne, the lake and adjoining country opened beautifully before us. The peasants have here a new variety of bonnets—a straw one, rising above the head in turrets, and ending in a sort of handle at the top, something like a bell. Lausanne is a town of eleven thousand souls; Protestant; one thousand six hundred and eighty feet above the sea. It is situated on three hills with their intermediate valleys, so that many of the streets are steep. It is filled with voituriers and carriages of all sorts, and claims a kind of privilege of furnishing travellers, who commonly enter Switzerland by way of France, for their Swiss tour in the summer, and their Italian in the winter. The lake of Lemane, or Geneva, on which it stands, is the largest in Switzerland, after that of Constance. It is above forty miles long, and ten broad; forty small rivers, besides the Rhone, fall into it; Geneva is at the other end of it. A steam-boat has just begun to sail in it, for the first time in Switzerland.

We heard yesterday and to-day of the effects of the dreadful storm on Wednesday night, when we were on the Righi: seven houses and many heads of cattle were destroyed. What thanks do we owe to a good Providence for preservation!—One stroke of lightning might have summoned the crowded guests of our inn, and us amongst them, to their eternal account! You have no idea, in England, of the storms in these warmer climates.

*Lausanne, Wednesday, 3 o'clock.*—We have taken lodgings for a month, with liberty to quit at a fortnight. A kind, excellent Swiss friend, whom we knew in London, has been indefatigable for our comfort. We have a suite of four rooms on the first floor, looking full on the fine Lake of Geneva; a sitting room about twenty-five feet square; three bed rooms, and a cabinet; all neat, and even elegant; with an approach through a gateway and yard, from the main street; so that we have the most exquisite view imaginable on the one side, and all the comforts of a town on the other. We have a nice little garden, to which we descend from our parlor; from this we look down upon a sweet garden belonging to another house; from which the vineyards begin still lower down the hill, and these vineyards extend to the lake itself. We pay two hundred and forty francs a month, about two pounds ten shilling a week.—It is no recommendation to us, but we are informed, that Gibbon inhabited our lodgings for six weeks, before his own house was ready for his reception.\*

\* Gibbon thus describes the situation of his house; which is quite applicable to our charming lodgings: "I occupy a spacious and convenient mansion, connected on the north side with the city, and open on the south to a beautiful and boundless horizon. A

*Thursday, 6 o'clock, morning, August 28.*—Lausanne is by no means a fine town in itself, but it is most beautifully situated. It stands above five hundred feet above the lake, and is a fine object from a distance. There are charming walks just beyond it, on one of the hills, commanding a view of the lake, and of the part of the town which stands upon a second and nearly parallel hill. The intermediate valley is filled with vines. Noble trees and seats increase the pleasure of the promenade. It was amongst the earliest towns to embrace the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The proverbial dissoluteness of manners of the Popish clergy of that era, is still talked of in Lausanne. The church of St. Anne, and the houses of the priests, were, in fact, turned into places of the grossest and most abandoned profligacy. It was thus, that the enormity of the evil, prepared men to receive the remedy.

Never was any point of history more clearly made out than the necessity of the Reformation. Christianity was almost forgotten, both in its doctrines and duties; and a frightful code of superstition, united with manners the most corrupt, was rapidly obliterating every trace of its genuine character. Even as the Roman Catholic religion exists now, a reformation would have been indispensable. But we are to judge of the importance of that great event, not by what Popery actually is, after the tacit influence on it of three centuries of evangelical truth, in the Reformed churches; but by what it was before Martin Luther separated from it, and by what it would have been, long before the present day, if that heroic Reformer and his noble associates had not acted as they did. And we are to recollect, that besides the gross errors, both in faith and practice, which disgraced it then, and which disgrace it still, it cherishes a spirit of persecution, insists on all its absurdities as matters of faith, imposes its iron yoke on the conscience, and will hear of no remonstrance, no advice, no correction.\*

The Panorama in London gives an accurate and pleasing view of the entrance to Lausanne from Geneva. In the evening, the dear children and I spent all the time in our sweet little garden,

garden of four acres has been laid out by the taste of M. Deyverdun; from the garden a rich scenery of meadows and vineyards descends to the Lemane lake, and the prospect far beyond the lake is crowned by the stupendous mountains of Savoy."

\* This tyrannical dominion is one characteristic of the fallen church of Rome. "We offer the Papists every thing we ought, and more than we ought," says Luther, "we only claim to ourselves the liberty of conscience, which we have in Christ Jesus. We will not be compelled or bound in conscience to any work, so that by doing it we should be righteous, by omitting it condemned. We will willingly use the same meats with them, and observe the same feasts and fasts, if they will only permit us to keep them of our free choice, and cease from these threatening words, by which they have hitherto terrified and subjected the whole world: 'We command, we insist, we excommunicate,' &c. Here we will, and ought to be rebels, and pertinacious; otherwise we should lose the truth of the Gospel, and our liberty, which we have, not in Cæsar, in kings, in princes, nor in the Pope, the world, and the flesh, but in Christ Jesus."—Comm. in Gal. p. 71. Wittenb. 1535.



or rather terrace, for we have a wall and iron railing which supports the ground of which it is composed; and this railing prevents our falling down thirty or forty feet into the next terrace-garden, which is immediately below us towards the lake. It is now six in the morning: the three windows of our saloon are open; the sun is mounting over the hills on the other side of the lake, and shedding a lovely tint on every object. Our kind fellow-traveller and my eldest son are going with me, in a car, to Geneva, (thirty miles) that I may not lose a moment in seeing after the translation of Scott.

You know that I have been some time engaged in assisting to have this admirable practical comment on the Scriptures translated into French.—The whole body of French Protestant Theology affords no one plain, spiritual, solid exposition of the Holy Scriptures. With immense difficulty I have found a translator well skilled in English, accustomed to literary occupation, master of a good style, and of the same sentiments with my author. He has nearly translated the Gospel of St. Matthew. The warm approbation of the design from all quarters exceedingly encourages me to go on; and the tendency to error and excess amongst some pious persons here, makes it more and more important. Still I feel a great doubt whether so large a work will succeed, in the present state of things, on the continent. At the utmost, I only expect it may conspire, with other more efficient and adequate measures, to aid the revival of religion. May God order, direct, and bless!

I approach Geneva (for which I am now setting off) with feelings of peculiar veneration. The name of Calvin stands high amongst the Reformers, divines, and scholars of the sixteenth century. There is no man to whom I owe so much as a commentator. The reproaches cast so liberally on what is called Calvinism in England, are, for the most part, (as moderate men of all parties now agree in allowing) either the effect of pure ignorance, or of dislike to spiritual religion. The excesses and daring spirit of too many modern religionists, have no warrant in the writings of Calvin. A more sober, practical, holy writer, generally speaking, does not exist. There was, undoubtedly, something harsh in his character; he carried his acuteness too far in his system of divinity, so as to overstep, in my judgment, the exact moderation of the Sacred Writings; and in his scheme of church government, he followed, not the Episcopalian, but the Presbyterian model. His virtues bordered on severity. But, after all these deductions, he was amongst the very first men of his own or any age; and the objections raised against his writings in modern times, have little or nothing to do with his failings, but might be almost as well raised against what the Scriptures state of the fall of man, of salvation by grace, of justification by faith, of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and of holy obedience as the fruit of love.\* In fact, these are the things in which true religion consists; and, therefore, they are distasteful to the pride and sensuality of fallen man. This dis-

like sometimes assumes one disguise and sometimes another; but it is only a disguise—the dislike as to vital godliness itself. What is now opposed in England as Calvinism, was opposed in the preceding age under other names; and will be opposed in the next age under names still varying with the fashion of the day.

*Nyon, on the road to Geneva, 21 miles, 1 o'clock, Thursday.*—We are sitting in a garden, at a most beautiful spot on the lake, which, with its deep-blue waters is rippling before us. We set off in our car at seven this morning, my son driving, and my friend and I going inside. The day is hot, but beautiful. We have driven most of the way through vineyards, which have little or no fence to them. The grapes are now large, and in some few spots ripe; but the vintage will not take place for a month. We passed through Morges and Rolle, two lovely towns, situated each on a bay of the lake, and affording, as you approach them, a charming view.

We are now at Nyon, the spot where Cæsar, after defeating the Helvetii, founded the first Roman colony, fifty-six years before the birth of our Lord. All here is fertility, industry, and fruitfulness. This lake of Geneva is diversified by perpetual bays, towns, chateaux, vineyards, orchards, country-houses. I observe, in the towns, that the shopkeepers, in their signs, give not merely a single figure, as in England; as of a man, a boot, a bottle, a hat, &c.; but a long board filled with all the figures of different sorts of boots, bottles, hats, which they happen to sell; so that you have quite an historical painting—in wretched style of course.

About six miles before we came to Geneva, we passed through the beautiful village of Coppet, celebrated as the residence of M. Neckar, and of his still more distinguished daughter, Madame de Staël. I much wished to have called at the chateau, to which I had been invited by the kindness of the present possessor, the Baron de Staël; but I found it was impossible. You will be charmed to hear that the Baron with his noble and amiable sister, are blessings to the neighborhood. Their benevolence and piety are such, that they acquaint themselves with the circumstances of all the poor families around them, and administer relief to their bodies and minds. It is quite delightful to think, that the descendants of one of the most able statesmen of France, and of perhaps the most brilliant writer of her age, should be devoting all their talents to the diffusion of the truest philosophy, the illumination and moral elevation of their fellow-creatures, by the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and of the blessings of real Christianity as purchased by our Lord and Saviour. It was with extreme regret I found myself unable even to make a short stay in this attractive spot.

*Geneva, Thursday night, nine o'clock.*—We arrived here about six, after a very hot, dusty, disagreeable journey in point of fatigue; our little low car placed us, as we approached the city, in the midst of the dust; and we met a continued succession of carriages. The country continued sweet and beautiful. The view of the cathedral, and other buildings of the city, from the hill, is very fine, chiefly from the circumstance of its being placed at the extremity of the lake, just where its waters flow out and form the Rhone. This

\* I place the preamble of his will at the end of this letter.

noble river, which I saw springing from the glacier, between the Grimsel and the Furca, and which was then a stream of mere turbid snow-water, enters the lake of Geneva at Boverat, nearly of the same muddy white color; but when it flows out and enters France, it is of the clearest deep-blue color, pure to the bottom. It seems to be nearly as wide here, as the Thames at London. As it rolls on to Lyon, it receives several rivers as large as itself, till at last, in its approach to the Mediterranean, it surpasses, in volume and rapidity, the Rhine. It is, altogether, one of the noblest rivers of Europe. It rushes through Geneva, in two or three large streams from the lake; and convenient bridges are thrown over them.

Geneva is very ancient; it is mentioned by Cæsar as the last town of the Allobroges, and the nearest to the borders of Helvetia. It now contains twenty-five thousand souls, in about one thousand houses, which gives a much larger proportion for each house than any other place I am acquainted with. The houses are accordingly very high—five or six stories. Many of the streets have a peculiarly awkward appearance from the roofs, at this extreme height, jutting out over the streets ten or twelve feet, and being propped up by poles, or wooden pillars, fixed on the ground below, and then secured midway by cross-beams. Nothing can be so awkward; and what increases the awkwardness is, that small rows of shops run opposite the houses between the foot-way and the street itself.\* It resembles somewhat our ancient city of Chester. The town is famed for education, talent, industry, and commerce. Watchmaking is particularly followed. Numbers of English are here, and in the neighboring villages, and country-houses, and their opinions and example have the greatest weight. I wish I could report that the tendency of them was uniformly good.

At the table-d'hôte, at supper, we had the mortification to find that the new steam-vessel sailed from Lausanne to-day, and brought nearly one hundred passengers, without heat, dust, &c., in six hours, what took us nearly twelve; nay, that the air was so fresh on the lake, that many persons put on their great-coats. We were the more vexed, because we had inquired about the boat, and were misinformed. The fact is, the steam-boat is so violently opposed by voituriers and inn-keepers' servants, that there is no learning the truth concerning it. It is a ten or twelve horsepower, built by a Scotch engineer, with a crew of Italians; burns wood; goes the tour of the towns on the lake once a week; and answers uncommonly well, having fifty or sixty passengers most days. I wrote a note to my translator last night, and am to see him this morning.

*Friday morning, seven o'clock.*—I am now writing in my room at my inn at Geneva, five stories high, with three windows overlooking the Rhone and the lake, and a view of the town and rising hills on the opposite shore. By being at this height, I am lifted up out of the smells, closeness, and heat of the streets at this hot season; and therefore ascend my eighty weary stairs, and cross the eight landing-places, contentedly.

\* This obstruction is, I understand, about to be gradually removed.

*Friday, half-past nine.*—I have sent to the post, and received your welcome letter of July the 29th; many, many thanks for all your intelligence. I have written a note to Cologne to recover your first. Present my kindest love to our friends of the Church Missionary Society; tell them to be of "good cheer in the name of the Lord:" these sad deaths amongst the missionaries, of which your letter gave me the account, are the way to life. Johnson and Palmer are names dear to the churches of Africa. I knew them both. Johnson attended me for some time before he went to Africa, to receive such advice and instruction as I could give him. The surprising success of his labors has often filled my heart with gratitude.\* His simplicity and devotedness were seldom equalled.

Palmer was also a man of peculiar faith and love. He had won my heart. In early life he had been in the army. In the retreat of Sir John Moore to Corunna he was quite a boy, and would have perished, if an officer had not rolled him in a blanket and thrown him on horseback behind him, and thus rescued him. He was at the battle of Waterloo; I remember the vivid description he gave me of that dreadful field. He described to me the majestic figure of Lord Wellington as he hastened on his fine charger, with his telescope in his hand, and his loose Spanish cloak floating behind him, to different parts of the line. At the close of the war, he devoted himself to another and a higher service; on that service he had just entered, when it pleased God thus to call him to himself, with his wife and infant child. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence. Johnson was removed in the midst of his eminent success; Palmer in the dawn of future promise. Johnson from the four or five hundred converts, and the seventeen hundred hearers whom he had been the means of collecting around him; Palmer from the crowded population of Free Town, where a wide field of probable usefulness was opening before him. The loss of two such men is a heavy stroke, and was meant to be felt; but may that God who has inflicted it, sanctify, support, overrule, comfort! The more my own health has failed, the more do I learn to feel for my friends in England under sickness and sufferings. I am myself, indeed, wonderfully better: I eat, sleep, and bear fatigue well; still I am not without feelings of weakness at times—and as life flows on, I see eternity more vividly before me.

The news has just arrived here that the Pope is dead, at the age of eighty-two or eighty-three. There is said to be a current prophecy at Rome, that whatever Pope shall reign twenty-four years, he will be the last. This Pope has reigned nearly twenty-four years. Would to God he may be the last!

*One o'clock.*—I have been three or four hours with my chief translator. He is evidently an amiable, pious, sensible, scholarlike young man; but dejected, feeble in health, and of a tender, and perhaps somewhat scrupulous, mind. St.

\* He left a congregation of 1700 people at Regent, a town near Sierra Leone, and schools of above 1000 children. The communicants were 450, all converted Negroes, who had been liberated from slave vessels.



Matthew is translated in the rough, and part of it is copied. I have been able to contradict a report which has been prevalent here, that I was actually dead. My friends were solemnly assured of the fact the other day; I believe they are now convinced that the report was premature.

*Lausanne, Saturday, August 30.*—I spent the evening, yesterday, with my translator at Geneva; saw what he had done in the translation, and fixed a meeting with some friends on the same business for next week. I met in the course of the evening several persons of much piety and tenderness of spirit. Afterwards I walked about many parts of the city, which is surrounded with a beautiful country. A new wooden bridge, suspended by iron wires, twisted together like cords, and carried over three stone gates or arches, is very curious. It leads across the fortifications and fosse, to a lovely point for seeing Mont Blanc, which, however, the cloudy weather forbade us to behold.

In the evening my friend and companion, with my son, drove out to Ferney, where Voltaire lived. The portraits of Milton and Sir Isaac Newton are in his room; his tomb was destroyed by the Austrians; but he ordered a bust to be erected at Ferney, fifty years after his death—1828. The mischief which he did to Switzerland, and especially to Geneva, is not to be described. A previous decline in spiritual religion, and in the great doctrines of their reformers, had disposed the Genevese to receive the poison of his writings and example. He boasted that the magistrates and clergy dined commonly with him; that all honest men were Deists, though some few Calvinists, out of a city of twenty-four thousand free-thinkers, remained; and that he should soon gain over the whole place. Howard, our celebrated philanthropist, said, in 1770, that he then found that “the principles of one of the vilest of men (so he describes Voltaire) had greatly debased the ancient purity and splendor of Geneva.” The fact is, that some even of the ministers of religion corresponded with Voltaire, and allowed him to jest with Christianity in his letters to them. They were not ashamed also to be present at his private theatre, with all its corruptions and profaneness. The consequences need not be stated.

When speaking on this subject, it is impossible not to lament, that the Christianity which Voltaire beheld, whether in France or in Geneva, was not calculated to give him a right impression of its high and holy tendency. Gross superstition, and a careless Protestantism, almost equally concealed from him the commanding grace and blessedness which the doctrine of a divine Saviour, and the rule of Christian holiness, are designed to convey. The extreme profligacy of the French court, under the regency, and throughout the reign of Louis XV. must have aided also in maturing his infidel and demoralizing principles.

This morning at six, my friend and I returned to Lausanne, in the steam-boat, leaving my son to drive home the car. Instead of eleven hours of sun, dust, and fatigue, we had six hours of cool, agreeable, tranquil passage over the lake. We reached Lausanne at twelve o'clock; and I found my dear family all well, and most happy in their nice lodgings. The heat is very great. The

Swiss say, each such day is a ton of gold in ripening the vintage. In the evening I walked with my old Lausanne friend to a beautiful hill, called The Signal; it presents a panoramic view of the town, lake, and adjoining country. The ascent is by a lovely winding path in the midst of meadows and vineyards.

*Sunday morning, August 31st, Lausanne, eleven o'clock.*—I have been already twice to church: at half-past six, the parish church near us was filled with people; and I heard a pretty good discourse from that admirable text, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John, iii. 14, 15. The fault of the sermon was, the being too superficial, too general, too declamatory. At nine, I went to the cathedral, to hear the first preacher in the canton. He is a doctor of divinity, of great respectability, and of a venerable appearance, about sixty-five years of age. The service began by a young student of the college ascending the pulpit, and reading, rather carelessly, three chapters of the Bible, whilst the congregation was assembling. He then read the Ten Commandments, and the summary of them given by our Saviour. Upon this he left the pulpit, and the preacher mounted it, who began by giving out two verses of a hymn. An organ led the immense congregation, whilst a chanteur, a sort of clerk, standing up in the middle of a pew (the congregation, I am sorry to say, sit in singing), sung with a very loud and distinct voice. Then the preacher read an excellent, but brief confession of sin, and some prayers. The whole of this part of the service was good; but, as I thought, vastly inferior to the simple and edifying liturgy of our own church.

He next delivered a discourse of twenty-five minutes, from 1 Cor. xi. 26.—“As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.” His divisions were clear and appropriate. First, Ye show forth the merit and propitiation of the death of Christ; secondly, Ye show forth the infinite love of Christ in that death, and the obligation we are under of loving each other; thirdly, Ye show forth your belief in the future coming of your Lord, and the fulfilment of all his promises. The whole was admirably good; striking, solid, elevated, instructive, evangelical—perhaps it wanted something as to the application to the heart and conscience towards the close. After the sermon, the reverend preacher read a prayer for all states of men; the creed; and a concluding prayer. The clerk very much offended me by sitting with his hat on during the service. The cathedral is a fine old large building.

*Nine at night.*—I resume. The venerable professor’s sermon at the cathedral this morning was so good, that I lament to hear his doctrine is not equally so at all times, and above all, that he joins in a persecution of a few very pious, though possibly not altogether discreet, persons who have lately appeared in the canton. What an inconsistent thing is human nature! Here, in this small republic, which boasts of its freedom, almost inquisitorial powers are assumed by the magistrates and clergy. This is exactly what I feared

when speaking of Bern. As soon as any person gives offence, the magistrates make no scruple of banishing him at once. They allow no dissidents from the establishment; not a soul. A minister who is suspended cannot preach at all. Now, at Geneva, non-conforming ministers, and meeting-houses are tolerated, at least for the present. And yet at Geneva, the church has openly denied the faith, whilst at Lausanne, the main features of orthodoxy are strongly insisted on: all these things furnish much matter for reflection.

Perhaps one may say, that indifference naturally leans towards toleration; and proud nominal orthodoxy towards persecution. Indifference inclines towards toleration, because it undervalues the importance of all religious sentiments; and because it is aware it needs for itself the forbearance it claims for others. But orthodoxy, when separated from the true spirit of the Gospel, is often self-righteous, bigoted, proud—proud of talents, proud of what it thinks the correct form of truth, proud of holding others in subjection, proud of crushing opposition, proud of erecting itself as a Pope in its own circle; it therefore leans towards persecution. These incidental evils do not at all lessen the immense importance of truth; in fact, they are not evils belonging to truth, but to the want of a practical, affectionate, humble apprehension of it, in all its extent.

At half-past eleven, this morning, we went to the English service, and heard an excellent sermon from an English clergyman, who was passing through the town. At two, I heard a fourth sermon, pretty good, from a professor of the cathedral—But I am weary, and must again say, adieu.

Believe me your affectionate,

D. W.

P. S. We think of taking a tour to Chamouny and the Great St. Bernard next week, after my meeting at Geneva; leaving Mrs. W. in this beautiful house, where we have one of the finest, softest views in Switzerland.

#### PREAMBLE TO CALVIN'S LAST WILL.

I subjoin, as a specimen of Calvin's theological views, as well as of his spirit and character, the preamble to his last will, dictated just before his death in May, 1564.

"In the name of the Lord, Amen. I, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in the church of Geneva, being so oppressed and afflicted with various diseases, that I am fully induced to think that the Lord God has determined shortly to take me out of this world, have ordered to be made and written my testament and my last will in the form that follows:

"First of all I give thanks to God that he had mercy on me (whom he created and placed in this world,) and not only delivered me from the profound darkness of idolatry in which I was sunk, and brought me into the light of his Gospel, and made me a partaker of the doctrine of salvation, of which I was most unworthy; and not only,

with the same mercy and loving-kindness, bore with my many faults and sins, for which I deserved to be rejected and cast off by him; but also that he hath exercised such gentleness and kindness towards me, as to deign to make use of me in preaching and promulgating the truth of his Gospel. And I testify and profess that it is my wish and intention to spend what may remain of my life in that same faith and religion which he delivered to me by his Gospel, nor to have any other hope or refuge for salvation than his gracious adoption; on which only my salvation rests. And I embrace with my whole soul the mercy which he has vouchsafed me for the sake of Jesus Christ, by making propitiation for my sins by the merit of his death and passion; so that satisfaction might be made for all my sins and transgressions, and the memorial of them be blotted out. I testify also and profess that I humbly beg of him that he will so wash and purify me by the blood of that supreme Redeemer, poured out for the sins of the human race (*effuso pro humani generis peccatis*;) that I may be permitted to stand before his tribunal in the image of the Redeemer himself. Also I profess that I have diligently laboured, according to the measure of grace and loving-kindness which God has bestowed on me, purely and simply to preach his word both in my sermons and in my writings and commentaries, and faithfully interpret his Holy Scriptures. I testify also and profess that in all the contentions and debates which I have had with the enemies of the Gospel, I have made use of no tricks nor sophistical and bad methods, but have acted candidly and sincerely in defending the truth.

"But, wo is me! all my labor and zeal (if they deserve the name) have been so remiss and languid, that I confess that innumerable things have been wanting to the right discharge of my office, and that unless the unbounded loving-kindness of God had aided me, all my labor would have been useless and vain. Yea, moreover I acknowledge that unless the same loving-kindness had helped me, the gifts and blessings of my mind which he vouchsafed to me would have more and more brought me in guilty, before his tribunal, of sin and negligence. On which account, I testify and profess that I have no other hope of salvation except this one, that God, as he is the Father of mercies, will show himself a Father to me who acknowledge myself a miserable sinner."

#### ARRETE OF LAUSANNE.

Since my return to England, I find an *Arrete* has actually been published at Lausanne, in the precise language that persecutors have almost universally adopted since Louis the Fourteenth's revocation of the edict of Nantes. It forbids all private religious meetings; and directs magistrates to dissolve such meetings by force. Every person found guilty of being present at these meetings is to be punished with fines, imprisonments, &c.

And is it in Switzerland—Switzerland, the nurse of the Reformation—Switzerland, the country of Zuingle and Ecolampadius, and Beza—



Switzerland, the last favorite refuge of religious liberty in Europe, that this has taken place? Who can too strongly express his detestation of such intolerant and unchristian measures? For the calumniated persons, who are the objects of it, are acknowledged on all hands to be peaceable members of the republic, unexceptionable in their moral conduct, and pious and devoted Christians. What trifling faults they may have committed, or what errors even they may have fallen into, I do not know, nor will I trouble myself to inquire;—it is enough for me to know that such infirmities and foibles, supposing them to exist, are no palliation whatever of the abominable guilt of persecution. But so it is. The clergy, when they refuse to accept of divine grace, have always been the worst of enemies to real spiritual religion. All experience declares this, and especially the history of the sufferings of Christ our Lord.

I subjoin a copy of the Arrêté, as a most curious document, and a sad specimen of what a Protestant government is capable of enacting:—

*“Le Conseil d’Etat du Canton de Vaud.”*

“Vu les rapports parvenus depuis quelques années, sur les principes et la conduite d’une nouvelle secte en matière de religion, vulgairement appelée des Momiers, qui s’est introduite dans le canton; ainsi que sur les assemblées ou réunions de cette secte qui, dans certains lieux, se tiennent aux mêmes heures que le service du culte public;

“Considérant que si l’autorité n’a pas à s’occuper de ce qui concerne les opinions religieuses des individus, en tant qu’elles n’influent pas sur l’ordre public, il est néanmoins de son devoir d’intervenir, lorsque ces opinions se manifestent par des actes extérieures qui tendent à troubler cet ordre public;

“Considérant que la nouvelle secte dont il s’agit, a donné lieu sur divers points du Canton à des désordres plus ou moins graves, qui, s’ils n’étaient arrêtés dans leur première cause, pourraient avoir par leur développement ultérieur de fâcheux résultats;

“Considérant que ces sectaires ont déclaré par l’intermédiaire de ceux qui s’annoncent comme leurs chefs ou directeurs, qu’ils se séparent de l’église Nationale et se rendent indépendants des institutions et ordonnances qui la régissent, pour former une église nouvelle;

“Considérant que les actes qui se font dans leur assemblée constitueraient ainsi un véritable culte, étranger à la religion de l’état;

“Considérant que les principes erronés ou exagérés professés dans les dites assemblées et hautement avoués soit par les sectaires, soit par ceux qui se présentent comme leurs Chefs, sont absolument subversifs de l’ordre social, tant sous le point de vue de l’union dans les familles, que sous celui des rapports qui dérivent des institutions civiles et religieuses;

“Considérant, enfin que les dits sectaires se placent, par leurs discours, leurs démarches, et leurs actes de prosélytisme, dans un état d’aggression ouverte contre l’église nationale;

“Où le département de l’intérieur—Arrêté.

“Article 1. Les Assemblées ci-dessus mention-

nées sont expressément défendues, comme contraires à l’ordre public et à la paix religieuse.

“Art. 2. Les Juges de paix et les municipalités spécialement chargés de faire dissoudre immédiatement toute assemblée ou réunion de ce genre, et cela par les moyens que la loi met à leur disposition pour le maintien de l’ordre public.

“Les Juges de paix et les municipalités feront sans délai rapport au conseil d’état des mesures qu’ils auront prises en exécution du présent article, et des circonstances qui auront provoqué des mesures.

“Art. 3. Toute personne réunie à une de ces assemblées prohibées, qui n’aura pas obéi de suite à l’ordre de se séparer et sera convaincue d’avoir, par sa résistance, mais l’autorité dans le cas d’employer la force, sera poursuivie pour être punie conformément à l’article 53 du Code correctionnel (trois jours de prisons) sans préjudice des peines plus graves auxquelles les suites de cette résistance pourraient donner lieu.

“Art. 4. Seront poursuivis pour être punis conformément à l’article 58 du Code correctionnel (600 livres d’amende, ou dix ans de prisons) suivant le prescrit de l’article 11 de la loi du 2 Juin, 1810, tous les individus dont les démarches tendraient à gagner des prosélytes à une secte contraire à la paix religieuse et à l’ordre public. Tout individu qui fournirait un emplacement quelconque pour y tenir des assemblées prohibées, sera envisagé, comme complice et poursuivi comme tel.

“Art. 5. Seront également poursuivis, pour être punis des peines mentionnées à l’article précédent tous les individus reconnus pour avoir provoqué ou dirigé une assemblée prohibée, ou pour avoir fonctionné en qualité de Chefs, ou de Directeurs, ou de tout autre manière semblable.

Art. 6. Le présent arrêté sera imprimé, publié, et affiché. Il sera transmis aux lieutenants du conseil d’état, aux Juges de paix, et aux municipalités chargés de veiller et de tenir la main à son exécution.

“Donné sous le sceau du Conseil d’Etat à Lausanne le 15 Janvier, 1824.

*“Suivent les signatures et le sceau.”*

Thus is the Inquisition of Spain transferred to Protestant Switzerland; and the noblest gift of the Reformation, LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE is openly violated.

As this part of the volume is again going through the press,\* I take the opportunity of giving some further information on the above most distressing subject, partly taken from letters lately received from Switzerland, and partly from other authentic sources. It is quite lamentable to see to what a length some of the SWISS PROTESTANT governments have actually carried the spirit of persecution.

I first give a copy of the law passed at Lausanne last May, four months after the above Arrêté, and embodying the enactments of that decree:—

*“Le grand conseil du canton de Vaud, sur la proposition du conseil d’Etat.”*

“Considérant que quelques personnes exaltées cherchent à introduire et à propager une nouvelle secte religieuse;

\* March, 1825.

"Voulant reprimer les actes de cette secte, qui troublent l'ordre public, décrète :

"Article 1. Toute assemblée de partisans de cette secte, formée de personnes étrangères à la famille, pour y exercer le culte, ou y célébrer quelque une des cérémonies de l'église, est défendue, et sera immédiatement dissoute.

"Art. 2. Les personnes qui auront présidé ou dirigé ces assemblées, y auront officie, ou auront fourni le local, seront responsables et punies de l'une des peines qui suivent.

"Art. 3. Toute acte de prosélytisme ou de séduction, tendant à gagner à cette secte, est interdit; et celui ou ceux qui s'en seraient rendus coupables, seront punis de l'une des peines ci-après.

"Dans l'appréciation de la gravité du délit, et dans l'application de la peine, les tribunaux prendront en considération la séduction exercée envers les instituteurs des collèges ou écoles, envers les personnes du sexe, ou celles qui sont sous l'autorité de parens ou tuteurs.

"Art. 4. Les contraventions aux articles 2 et 3 ci-dessus seront punies, ou par une amende qui ne pourra excéder six cents francs, ou par la défense d'aller ou de séjourner dans telle commune, ou par la confinement dans une commune pour un temps qui ne pourra excéder une année, ou par une prison de discipline qui ne pourra excéder une année, ou enfin par un bannissement hors du canton qui ne pourra excéder trois ans.

Art. 5. La défense d'aller ou de séjourner dans une commune sera convertie en confinement du condamné dans sa commune, pour un temps qui ne pourra excéder une année, dans le cas où il aurait enfreint cette défense.

La confinement dans une commune sera convertie en prison de discipline pour le reste du temps, si le condamné avait enfreint sa confinement.

Le bannissement hors du canton sera converti en prison de discipline pour le reste du temps, si le condamné avait rompu son ban.

Art. 6. Toute cause qui aura pour objet un des délits prévus par la présente loi, sera nécessairement soumise au tribunal d'appel.

Art. 7. Le conseil d'état est chargé de la publication et de l'exécution de la présente loi.

Donné sous le grand sceau de l'état, à Lausanne, le 20 Mai, 1824.

Such is the harsh and inconsistent law of a Protestant Swiss canton, in the enactments of which neither is the sect well defined, nor the crime clearly pointed out, nor the punishment invariably fixed, but all is left to the interpretation of tribunals and the eagerness of informers. It seems that if a single person, not of the family, should be present where the Scriptures are read by a parent to his children and servants, the whole number would be considered as guilty. This is far more indefinite and oppressive than the French laws, bad as they confessedly are, which prohibit the periodical assembly of more than twenty persons without the authority of the government; and thus at least define precisely the act which is to be considered as criminal.

And above all, what is this prohibition of proselytism? Are not men to be allowed, by reasoning and persuasion, peaceably to propose their senti-

ments to others? May men talk of politics, literature, philosophy, and is religion alone—the one thing needful—to be banished from their conversation.

But I proceed to give some account of the actual execution of this unjust law.

M. Charles Rochat, minister of the Gospel, of the canton de Vaud, of a respectable family, and whose brother is one of the national clergy of the canton, is the first on whom the severity of the new law has fallen. Five persons were found seated around a table in his house, with the Bible open before them—the wife of M. Rochat, a common friend, with two of his sisters, and a young person, a stranger. This was the whole crime. M. Rochat was found guilty of reading in his own house, before his wife and four friends, a chapter of the New Testament! For this he was at first condemned to three years' banishment, which, however, the tribunal of appeal reduced to one year.

Next, M. Oliver was banished for two years by the sentence of the same law.

Like judgments have been pronounced against M.M. Chavannes, Juvet, and Fivaz, of whom the two former were previously confined TEN WEEKS IN PRISON.

Two females were also banished by the judgement de première instance of the tribunals of Orbe and Yverdon, on the charge of similar meetings being held at their houses; one of whom, however, has been since acquitted at Lausanne, as it was proved that she lived with her mother, and, consequently, that it was at her mother's house, and not at her's, that some friends after dinner had read the Bible together.

But it is not merely in the canton de Vaud that these enormous instances of injustice have occurred; at NEUCHÂTEL an act of arbitrary power has just been committed, almost incredible from its severity. An old law, long obsolete, has been discovered, which it seems was passed two or three hundred years back. A simple agriculteur has been made the first victim of its revived powers. He received into his house M. Juvet, one of the condemned ministers of the canton de Vaud, and allowed him to administer the sacrament. For this crime he was thrown into PRISON FOR THREE MONTHS, and was then brought up in chains and with a rope drawn tight round his neck to receive sentence. TEN YEARS OF BANISHMENT was the punishment pronounced; and if he shall attempt to return before the expiration of this term, he is to be MARKED WITH A HOT IRON for the first offence, and for the second to BE HUNG. No passport was given him; so that he is left to be hunted about from place to place like the most degraded criminal. This worthy man, whose name is Magnin, has a wife and three children, for whom he has now no means of procuring support.

Such is the account which has just been received. Possibly some slight circumstances may be inaccurately stated, from want of more complete information on the part of my correspondents; but of the main facts, no doubt whatever can be entertained. Grosser acts of unqualified persecution have seldom been perpetrated, since the glorious Reformation first burst the chains of Popish darkness and cruelty. Nor can any one thing, in my opinion, be so deeply criminal in the eye of



that God who is the sole judge of the consciences of his creatures, and who has committed to civil governments the duty of restraining and punishing open immorality and vice, and upholding piety and virtue; but not of erecting a tribunal over the feelings and various judgments of men in minor points of religious practice; much less of abusing the sword of justice to purposes of base and wanton cruelty, in matters purely indifferent.

Our Warburton has nobly shown that for the magistrate to meddle with Christian doctrine and discipline, in the detail, must be the source of endless confusion. To maintain religion in its elementary principles, as the spring of public morals, and to protect the national profession of it from insult and outrage, whilst a full toleration is granted to those who peaceably differ from the majority with regard to the form of it, is the very utmost limit of the magistrate's power; all beyond is persecution.

The low state of the Protestant churches has long been lamented by every serious mind. But still the free toleration which for more than a century they have afforded to the true servants of God has, at least, honorably distinguished them from the tyranny and ambition of the church of Rome. LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE is the badge of the Reformation, and has now been fully understood and generally acted upon for a series of years, in Protestant states; whilst persecution and cruelty have been left, as by general consent, to be one of the characteristics of the GREAT PAPAL APOSTACY.

Other evils have, it is true, too much infected the Protestant bodies—these we do not palliate or conceal—but the peculiar guilt of persecution has hitherto been abhorred amongst them. Indifference, skepticism, Socinianism, impiety, vice, must be confessed to have too widely prevailed. Some of the reformed churches have, alas! lamentably declined from evangelical truth and vital religion, and have been long verging further and further from the strictness of the Gospel in every respect, except as this one blessing of RELIGIOUS FREEDOM has supplanted the monster persecution, and has left an opening for the “witnesses to prophecy,” as the Apostle speaks, “in sackcloth.” So long as this was the case, a hope of a revival of religion might always be entertained; because true Christians were still allowed, by their public and private labors, to endeavor to persuade and convince mankind. Declines, in spiritual religion, are the fruits of our fallen nature generally, and are quickly remedied as often as the mercy of God returns to a people, and a continuance of religious freedom allows that mercy to operate.

Thus, in England, the generous spirit of toleration left open the way for the extensive revival of real Christianity which is now going on amongst us; and has attended, in every step of its progress, the diffusion of the evangelical doctrines on which that revival rests. But if persecution be once permitted to resume its baneful influence—if the witnesses for Christ and his grace, in a corrupt world, be banished or imprisoned—if the peculiar doctrines of the redemption of the Gospel, which brought our forefathers out from the church of Rome, are proscribed in the very churches which were formed by that separation—if we unite a

lukewarmness about divine truth, or rather an indifference what errors are maintained, provided men are not living and preaching according to the true faith of Christ, with a spirit of intolerance and persecution—that is, if we join the worst INCIDENTAL evils of Protestantism, with the foulest DIRECT enormities of Popery—the consequence will be, that our “candlestick will be removed out of its place,”—Rev. ii. v.—and the fearful arm of the Saviour be soon aroused in the defence of his violated cause. Soon will “judgment overtake us”—soon will “the ambassadors of peace” be recalled—soon will national calamities “avenge the quarrel of God’s covenant”—soon will the ministers of grace be sent to other people “bringing forth the fruits thereof”—and the Protestant churches be left “as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city—and then the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.”—Isaiah i. 8. 31.

I know it is alleged, in extenuation of severe enactments, that enthusiasm and disorder are the consequences of unlimited toleration—but I know how weak and futile are such allegations. Undoubtedly, most great revivals of religion are attended, through the infirmity of our nature, with some extravagancies and excesses—no wise man can expect it to be otherwise—but what is the true remedy of such evils? Not persecution, but the force of reason and right conduct—the influence of sound and holy doctrine—the persuasion of Scriptural warnings and admonitions—the calm and friendly treatment which experience and wisdom furnish to youth and indiscretion—and especially the preaching of the full truth of the Gospel, in all its sobriety and force, by the established ministers of the church. Against such weapons enthusiasm has never been able to stand. It soon dies away. The minds of men are gradually informed. The Scriptures are seen to abound with the most suitable examples and instructions against it. The new teachers of religion acquire growth and solidity—a distinction is made between true and false zeal—the consequences of intemperate warmth are observed in the folly of those who are most heated with it—and, at last, a genuine and sound piety of principle and conduct is generally recognised and cultivated.

Such is the natural course of things. Whereas, if the sword of vengeance is raised against pious and unoffending citizens, on the ground of religious opinions and practices, all is thrown into confusion—the innocent and conscientious are punished—the sanctity of truth is outraged—the progress of reformation stopped—the Spirit of grace quenched and dishonored—the chains of ignorance, indifference, and vice, forged and prepared—all inquiry into real religion checked—the timid part of the clergy, induced by fear, to conceal and abridge the truth of the Gospel—every thing reduced to a formal and stationary routine—a dead calm spread over the church—and every thing lost as to vital piety. Thus the surest foundations of national prosperity are dug up—the spring of virtuous enterprise broken—morals left to mere natural motives—arts, science, commerce, discouraged and enervated—and, above all, the blessings of Almighty God withdrawn.

I trust that the remonstrances of Protestant Europe may prevail with the Swiss governments to reconsider their proceedings; and that ere long this foul blot on the Reformed churches may be wiped out, and the true spirit of religious liberty and toleration again distinguish and bless their communities. It is understood, that many of the clergy of the Canton de Vaud bitterly regret the steps which have been taken; but are at present borne down by the magistrates in the council.—Whether those clergy might have prevented the enactment of the law, if they had boldly and fully protested against it from the first, it is now impossible to say, and in vain to inquire. I can only hope, that the repeal of it will as speedily as possible obliterate the memory of the lamentable facts which have been just related.

Such a hope is not too sanguine. Already has a most forcible remonstrance been presented to the government, signed by twenty-six ministers. This cannot but produce good. The document is valuable, both as it *explicitly avows* the adherence of so large a part of the clergy to the admirable Helvetic Confession, (which, next to our own Thirty-nine Articles, is perhaps the best of all the Protestant Confessions,) and also as *explicitly disavows* the principles of persecution.—The following are extracts:

—“Nous déclarons donc ici solennellement que nous regardons la confession de foi Helvétique comme conforme aux paroles de l'Ecriture Sainte, et à la doctrine de notre Sauveur Jesus-Christ, règles invariables de notre foi; et que, loin de prêcher ni d'enseigner rien qui lui soit contraire, nous l'adoptons sincèrement et en suivons fidèlement les directions, nous y tenant pour obligés, devant Dieu et devant les hommes, par notre conviction intime et par le serment que nous avons prêté en conséquence.”—

—“Nous pensons que le Christianisme ne doit s'entendre et régner que par les armes de la persuasion, rendues efficaces par la grâce de l'Eternel notre Dieu; que, de plus, les rigueurs pourraient aigrir et éloigner davantage ceux que la douceur eût peut-être ramenés; que les lois, pour peu qu'elles fussent sévères contre des séparatistes, pourraient prêter des armes trop redoutables aux hommes moins éclairés que les législateurs, et qui auraient à en faire l'application; qu'elles pourraient enfin influer d'une manière fâcheuse sur le jugement du peuple moins éclairé encore: opinion que nous ne pourrions que trop justifier par l'histoire des démêlés religieux de tous les temps et de tous les lieux. Ainsi, repoussant de toutes nos forces le reproche de persécution dont le clergé est si souvent l'objet, nous demandons, du fond de notre cœur, à notre Dieu et à notre Sauveur, qu'il incline à la clémence le cœur de nos souverains magistrats; qu'ils se regardent comme les pères de tous ceux qui ont le bonheur de vivre sous leur gouvernement, et les protègent également; que s'ils croient devoir déployer la sévérité des lois, suivant leurs attributions, ce ne soit jamais pour gêner la conscience de leurs administrés, dont elle est le domaine sacré et inviolable; qu'ainsi, abandonnant à Dieu le soin de punir les offenses qui ne regardent que lui, ils laissent au temps, à la grâce et à la persuasion qui

decoule de la sainte parole, le développement de leurs salutaires effets.”—

With a protest containing such sentiments, I do not despair of the Swiss churches. Truth will revive and spread. The doctrines of the Reformation will flourish the more for this attempt to oppress them. The consciences of men will be awakened; and persecution will again fail, as it ever has done, of crushing “THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.”

The immense importance of the case will, I am sure, plead my excuse for these observations and extracts. Protestant Switzerland stands on the edge of a most fearful precipice. The conduct of the church of Geneva will be considered in a future part of this work, and therefore is not here adverted to.\*

## LETTER XI.

Geneva, Sept. 2.—Martigny, Sept. 6, 1823.

Translation of Scott—Cathedral at Lausanne—Pere Girard—Mont Blanc—Conversation with Geneva—Savoy—Bonneville—Valley of Cluse—Goitres—St. Martin's—Chede—Servoz—De Sausure—Chamouny—Glacier of Bossons—Accident in ascent of Mont Blanc—Italian Gentlemen—Montanvert—Couvercle—Mer de Glace—Alps—Infamous sentence in Strangers' Book—Tete Noire—Trient—French Emigrants.

Lausanne, Tuesday morning, Sept. 2, 1823.

MY DEAREST SISTER—Yesterday I was employed the whole morning in examining two chapters of the translation of Scott, which I had brought with me from Geneva. I went over it, line by line, and word by word. It gave me satisfaction; it is, so far as I see, faithful, clear, simple; nothing is omitted, nothing changed. But I am no kind of judge. A good translation is a task of incon-

\* I leave the above pages unaltered in the present edition. The facts I believe, are correct, and the observations still too applicable to the existing state of things. The last accounts with which I am acquainted are those stated in the Christian Observer for November and December 1826—Three years of continued persecution, in the face of Protestant Europe, after all the means employed in various ways for awakening a sense of shame in the minds of the Lausanne authorities, is a portentous event! But I have had an opportunity of conversing with one or two persons of influence in the Pays de Vaud, and the incurable prejudices against all spiritual religion which seemed to possess their minds, convinced me of the real cause of the persecution, and of the hopelessness of remedying the evil by mere argument.—Divine grace, the influence of truth, remorse of conscience, conversion, the holy lives and deaths of the sufferers, the rapid spread of the proscribed doctrines, the removal of the chief persecutors by sickness, or change of abode, or the hand of death—these are the means which a good Providence will employ, in its own time, for the relief of the injured and oppressed. In the mean while, may earnest prayers be poured out by all those who love the Saviour, in behalf of the sufferers, and of the sacred cause in which they are engaged.—March 1827.



ceivable difficulty. The value of the original work rises in my view every time I consult it—such solidity; honesty; strong sense; originality; theological knowledge; evangelical purity of doctrine; simple following of the mind of the sacred writers; freedom from party spirit; discretion; sound and manly criticism; acute resolution of difficulties; practical and holy tendency throughout. I really know of no commentary, except, perhaps, Calvin's, which is equal to it.

What I most want, is more steady, competent laborers; there is still very, very much to be done before St. Matthew will be ready for the press. I am going off to-day to meet our friends at Geneva, about the work; and then to proceed to Chamonney. It is possible we may go on to Martigny, and even Milan, and return by Lyon. The weather is most inviting.

In going to the cathedral yesterday, I found it was built on an extremely high hill; you first ascend a street exceedingly steep, and then come to a singular covered staircase (in the open street) of one hundred and seventy steps; so that the church stands quite on a pinnacle; the view which it presents of the surrounding country is of almost unequalled extent and sublimity. The academy is near the cathedral. It was founded in 1537. Henry Stephens and Beza were formerly professors in it. It has now about two hundred students. The library is remarkable for the books left to it by Don Jacynthe de Quiros, a Spanish gentleman who, in 1750, quitted the church of Rome, embraced the reformed religion, and became professor of ecclesiastical history at Lausanne.

At one o'clock yesterday I visited a pious family, two or three miles from Lausanne, at a house beautifully situated in the midst of vineyards, and commanding a fine view of the lake. I had a most affecting conversation with them. The father, mother, sisters, all seem quite in earnest about their salvation. But, unhappily, they have few wise, enlightened guides. Too many of the ministers at Lausanne, with much orthodoxy and zeal, are said to want that humble and practical knowledge of the Gospel, as a concern of the heart, without which they cannot direct others. On the other hand, a pious minister (who has lately been silenced,) has fallen into the dangerous error of always dwelling on the mysterious doctrine of the divine election, &c.; so that the serious people are almost as sheep without a shepherd. What a delight is it on a journey to be able to advise, comfort, and strengthen, in any degree, the minds of distressed brethren in the faith! I could scarcely tear myself away from this family.

At Geneva, things I am told are much worse than here, as to the public doctrines taught by the clergy. The decline in religion began in that city about eighty years back, when the subscription to the formulæ of the Swiss Reformers—the noble and most scriptural Helvetic confession—was abolished; then came in Voltaire as a resident in the town; next, the catechism of Calvin was done away with; lastly, a *règlement* was issued about six years since, drawn up with adroitness and caution, but plainly intended to prevent the ministers from preaching explicitly and fully on the divinity of Christ, original sin, grace, and

predestination—the three former of which articles contain the very sum and substance of the Gospel; and the latter of which is undoubtedly an important scriptural doctrine. Thus, from being the flower of the Reformed churches, Geneva has (for the time, and I trust it will be only for a short time,) fallen into the gulf of deism and Socinianism.

I have obtained a copy of the pamphlet published by the friends of M. Girard, the schoolmaster at Fribourg, giving an account of the whole of his proceedings. It is authorized by the municipal council. It seems that the charge alleged against him was, that his schools of mutual instruction were hostile to religion. The statement, however, of M. Girard proves that the principles of religion, and religion too of the Roman Catholic form, entered into all his arrangements. The Catholic catechism of the diocese was the chief book, and his schools were warmly approved of by the bishop. Still the Jesuits were dissatisfied because some good sense and sincere piety were apparent in M. Girard's method. His crime was, that he made *faith working by love* the end and foundation of his instruction; that he was attached to the principles of Fenelon and Rollin, and avoided all mere mechanism in education; that he labored, as he states, to place religion in the understanding and in the heart of the children.

The municipal council of Fribourg, notwithstanding the arts of the Jesuits, solemnly assure him of their approbation. They tell him "that their Master-instructor, the divine Redeemer, neglected not, in his instructions, the forming of the heart; his manner of teaching was never a dry theory. You are, then, reverend father," they continue, "misunderstood; the expression is too weak; but truth at last will resume her rights.—Man proposes; God disposes. We think, that because God loves our school, he has been pleased to visit it with chastisement.

"The municipal council, faithful to its oath, will fulfill its duties, of which it feels the honor and the importance; not one of its members would charge himself, as it respects the present and future generations, with the responsibility of being indifferent at such a solemn moment. Let us hope! God, whom we invoke, will protect our children, and save them from the abyss."

Nothing can be more affecting, I think, than this touching appeal. An address from the heads of families in Fribourg closes the pamphlet, testifying to the same facts. "Our conviction," say they, "ought to be of some weight in the scale; we have a right to express it. And who are the best judges? those who blame the school without knowing it, or the fathers of families, the earliest teachers of their children, who have constantly their eye fixed on their morals, their docility, their progress, and who can compare the present with the past?"

The pamphlet was published at Fribourg about four months since. It affords a further illustration of the good which is going on in Catholic countries, to an extent we have little idea of in England; but, at the same time, of the spirit of the Jesuits and chief rulers in the present councils of the Popedom,

Geneva, Wednesday morning, 5 o'clock.—We

had a delightful sail yesterday in the steam-boat. The only drawback on our pleasure was, that my dear Mrs. W. was not with us; her health obliges her to remain tranquil during this our second mountain tour. The view of the banks of the lake, as we sailed by, was exquisite, especially as the evening drew on. We passed the château of Prangins, where Joseph Bonaparte resided after his Spanish dream of royalty. The Mont Blanc was visible above the mountains of Savoy, almost the whole way; and at sunset, it remained illuminated, or rather gilded by the sun, full twenty minutes after every other mountain was in the shade. Its height is not apparently greater than that of the Jungfrau Alp; but its extent, size, various ridges, enormous platforms, &c., make it infinitely more majestic; it appears literally a region of ice and snow.

During our passage, I had a long conversation with some respectable young Genevese, on various religious topics. It was grievous to see how the poison of the prevailing sentiments at Geneva had infected their minds. They seemed to have no fixed principles, except a loose general notion that the Bible was the word of God. All the evangelical doctrines they thought harsh, doubtful, or unimportant—moral instruction was all that man required—every one had a right to put his own sentiments on the New Testament, as the Reformers had put theirs—all opinions were equally good, if men's conduct only was conformed to them. Such is the sophistry by which the stupendous revelation of a divine Redeemer, dying for our sins, and sanctifying us by his Spirit, is evaded, and the dregs of heathen ethics alone retained—that is, the whole Bible, as the standard of truth, is overthrown, and "the imaginations of man's own heart" substituted in its place.

At our landing, our kind friends were waiting for us on the shore, and I had a conference with them for two hours. They met me again for three hours, this morning at seven. We are gradually arranging the plan of the publication of St. Matthew. I agreed to provide a person to copy the MSS. fair for the printer; fixed January the first for the time when all should be ready for the press; and promised to meet them again in about three weeks, on my return from Chamouny. These Genevese friends seem men of the deepest piety and sweetest spirit of love; I was delighted and edified. I forgot to say, that our lodging-house at Lausanne is Maison Milquet St. Pierre, première étage; it is quite worth recording, in order to inform any friends who may be coming to Lausanne.

*Bonneville, 18 miles from Geneva, half-past two.*—We are now in the duchy of Savoy, attached to the kingdom of Sardinia. The capital is Turin, which we hope to see before we return. Our road has run through the valley of the Arve. The country has been singularly beautiful, something like the valley of the Reuss, only that the river Reuss incomparably surpasses the muddy, straggling, wandering Arve, whose shores are desolation itself. Savoy is Catholic; and negligent, indolent, and in many parts, dirty. The vines, instead of being regularly planted and supported in rows, as in the neighboring lands, are positively

allowed to grow at random, in the most scrambling manner, on the ground, with potatoes or willows rising among them. This small market town of Bonneville has six hundred inhabitants. Just before I left Geneva, your parcel arrived from London. I had time to send it on to Lausanne without a moment's delay.

*St. Martin, near to Sallenche, 36 miles from Geneva, eight o'clock.*—We have had a most charming drive. The valley of Cluse opened upon us about two leagues from Bonneville. Cluse (the Roman Clausum, because, according to some, it appears to close up entirely the valley) is romantically situated on the Arve. The craggy mountains are in contrast with the sweet fertility of the valley, and vary so perpetually in their outline, site, and appearance, that it is impossible for words to convey any adequate idea of them. At one particular spot, three small cannon were drawn up by some peasants and fired, to give us the pleasure of hearing the repeated echo of the mountains.

Two things distressed us to-day, one a natural, the other a moral defect—almost every second person here has a swollen neck; sometimes so as to distort the whole figure; it almost amounts to a goitre; children often have it. Besides other inconveniences, I conceive it must materially impede the poor in their labors. The other defect is, the lamentable misery and superstition of these parts. We actually saw on a cross, by the roadside, this notice, "The archbishop of Chambéry and bishop of Geneva grants forty days' indulgence to all those who shall say before this cross, a pater, and an Ave-Maria, with an act of contrition, 1819." And yet this bishop of Geneva ruled that fine canton till the Reformation; and it was only in 1754, that the duke of Savoy relinquished his claims upon it. O what a blessing is deliverance from the monstrous domination and errors of the church of Rome! The duke once made, as perhaps you know, a base attempt to seize the town, in 1604, in the dead of the night, and during a profound peace: the heroism of the Swiss, however, was not to be overcome; and they repulsed the invaders. The river Arve, by which we have been travelling, is a torrent springing in Savoy, and pouring into the Rhone, near Geneva; it swells so suddenly at times, as to cover all the adjoining fields, and do great mischief.

*Servoz, on the road to Chamouny, 11 o'clock, Thursday, Sept. 4.*—We set off at eight this morning, after wretched beds, and a wretched breakfast; but all has been repaid by the magnificent view we had of Mont Blanc, in all its splendor. The mass, or rather chain of Alps, bearing the general name of Mont Blanc, covered with perpetual snow, rose over the intervening mountains. The contrast between the snowy terrors of the Alps, immediately above us, and the rich verdure of the valley, the profusion of trees on the hills, and the lovely meadows creeping up their sides, by which we were passing, was really incredibly striking. The outline of the fir-crowned mountains, in the near prospect, was surmounted with the snows of Mont Blanc, apparently quite close; so that it seemed impossible that we should be melting with heat, so near to tremendous ice



and cold. At one point, we had first the small lovely lake of Chède at our feet; then its banks, gently rising and presenting themselves above; next the verdant mountains; and lastly, Mont Blanc, of which the vast snowy summits were beautifully reflected in the clear surface of the lake.

Before, however, we came within view of this astonishing Alp, we stopped to visit a fine cascade at Chède village. The torrent falls altogether above one hundred feet; but it is divided into five different branches or beds, which the stream has worked for itself. It was very curious to see a beautiful rainbow, as early as nine in the morning, formed by the spray, and which, from the point where we stood, was nearly an entire circle, beginning in the rain upon the grass on one side, continuing over the torrent, and then returning to the grass almost under our feet on the other. But I can think of nothing but Mont Blanc; it so much surpasses all my expectations. When our good friend was here four years ago, the day was wet, and he saw nothing; the weather to-day is superb, and we see every thing. The very village where we now are is romantic beyond description. I am sitting at the door of the inn, writing on a rough wooden table, which shakes at every movement of my hand—the village church just in view—a few scattered houses around it—three noble mountains guarding it behind, on which some fine clouds are just resting—fruitfulness apparent all around—whilst company are driving up to the village, on the same errand with ourselves; and the sun from behind the mountains is casting the prospect into alternate light and shade.

Astonishing indeed are the works of the great God—impressed with the footsteps of his majesty, power, and grace. We only want a heart constantly raised up to him in gratitude, and seeing him in all the operations of his hands, to complete the duty, and enhance the pleasure of such a scene of wonders!

*Chamouny, seven o'clock, Thursday evening, 24 miles from St. Martin's.*—After leaving Servoz, we soon entered the valley of Chamouny, which, as late as 1741, was almost entirely unknown. Two Englishmen then explored it. In 1760, M. de Saussure undertook his first journey to it. The ascent of Mont Blanc by that enterprising traveller, in 1787, brought it at length into notice; and nearly one thousand strangers soon visited it annually. The reputation of the valley, and the conveniences prepared for travellers, have been increasing ever since; so that we have found here one of the very best inns in Switzerland. Chamouny is separated from all the great roads, and seems quite cut off from the rest of the world. It is about twelve miles long, and a mile broad. At the entrance of the valley is a monument erected to a naturalist, who fell down a fissure a few years since, by neglecting his guide, and was lost. Such warnings perpetually occur. A lad with a trumpet astonished us, at a particular part of the road, with the echo which the Alps returned at every blast.

About a league from Chamouny, we came to the small village of Bossons, above which is a most noble glacier, so situated, that travellers are

able to cross over it. We ascended the contiguous mountain, excessively steep, about two thousand five hundred feet. We then passed over the heap of loose stones, cast up by the last éboulement, which lay between us and the glacier, and thus came on the solid mass of ice and frozen snow. There was one great fissure in it which it was terrible to look down; and at the bottom of which roared a torrent of water; all the surface of the glacier was slippery, from the heat of the sun upon it. It was cold as December. The scene was very fine.

After making our way across, we had a much more difficult heap, or rather ruin of stones and loose rocks, first to ascend and then to descend, before we could find the path which led again to Bossons. Part of the road which we took was that by which De Saussure, with his eighteen guides, ascended, in 1787. Indeed we may be said to have been at the foot of Mont Blanc all the afternoon. I see one of its summits (fifteen thousand five hundred feet, the highest ridge in the old world) at this moment from my chamber-window. On a ridge of the Alp, perhaps two thousand feet above me, a fire is just now lighted, as a sign of rejoicing that no animal has been lost during the day in driving down the cattle for the winter.

Almost the first person I saw in the inn here was a gentleman from England, who three years ago ascended Mont Blanc, in a company of sixteen. They reached the grand plateau of the Alp, (thirteen thousand five hundred feet) the fourth day, after incredible fatigues, from rain, snow, cold, and the hard rocks, with only a covering of leather to protect them during the night.—They were obliged to send down two guides, the second day, for food. On this vast plateau, or ledge, they found an immense quantity of fresh fallen snow, not frozen; it was extremely laborious to walk on, the snow was so deep; still none of the guides apprehended danger. But on a sudden the whole field of snow on which they were treading gave way, and overwhelmed the unfortunate travellers; their footing sunk; and they were covered, rolled along, borne away, by the enormous avalanche. The snow lodged in the next fissure, or crevasse, which it met in its descent. Three guides unhappily perished; the other thirteen persons extricated themselves with infinite difficulty—or rather were preserved by the mercy of God.

Still persons are frequently ascending; or attempting to ascend, for they seldom reach the real summit. Six guides went up with a single Englishman the day before yesterday; and some friends have been all to-day watching them from the inn, with a telescope: they are expected down to-night. The first persons who ever reached the summit of Mont Blanc were James Balma and Dr. Paccard, in 1786. The following year M. De Saussure, with eighteen guides, attained the same eminence. He spent five hours there. The rarity of the air was such, that his pulse was above 100; he had no appetite, and suffered much from intolerable thirst. The winding path is between fifty and sixty miles altogether, of steep ascent.

We have met here an Italian gentleman, with

whom we had made a slight acquaintance at Basle; a quick, ready, sensible man—talking French and English tolerably well—one who has for above twenty years spent his summers in travelling—neat in his person—about forty years of age—equipped with all the smaller conveniences which so long an experience could not fail to give him—he has read a good deal of history and politics, and is very communicative. He has one very good practice; he never sets out on a tour till he has devoted six months to a thorough study of all the best writers on the country he is about to visit. A turn to satire gives a point to his remarks. His admiration of England is extreme; but I can observe, that he takes a pleasure in relating little anecdotes to the disadvantage of individual Englishmen. He has collected five stories in his present tour. I suppose he calls himself a Catholic; but he has clearly no just impression of the importance of religion. He speaks on the subject with levity, and even indecorum; mingling the tenets of his church with the essential truths of Christianity, and laughing at both. He was just now telling one of the guides, who he heard would not eat flesh on Fridays, that the Pope being dead, (as I mentioned in my last) he was at liberty to eat meat whenever he liked; but that if he had any fears, he would give him a billet to Jesus Christ. I could not help remonstrating with him for the latter part of this sentence; observing, that though I was a Protestant, and of course did not hold the Catholic Fasts, I still agreed with the Catholics in the great truths of our common Christianity, and especially in adoration and love to our divine Saviour. He received the hint with perfect politeness, and dropped the subject. I remember the Italian nobleman at the Grimsel said something, in the same ironical way, of the Holy Ghost choosing a new Pope. Secret infidelity is widely spreading in Italy.

*Friday morning, half-past 6, chalet on Montanvert, 3,150 feet above Chamouny.*—We were called this morning at half-past three, and started at half-past four, for the Jardin on the Mer de Glace, in a party of thirteen; a guide and mule for each, with boys, &c. We have been ascending two hours in fearful cold and wind, on a road steep beyond description, three leagues long, amidst the ruins of fallen trees and rocks.

*Twelve o'clock, Couvercle, Mer de Glace.*—I am now writing on a spot, where, perhaps, never man wrote before, and whence I can scarcely look around me without terror. We have been walking and climbing, for five hours, ten or fifteen miles up hills and mountains of ice, snow, and impenetrable rocks, amidst chasms and torrents hundreds of feet deep. I am now on the heights of the Mer de Glace, nine thousand two hundred feet above the sea, seated on the ground, with my letter and pocket ink-horn before me, a rock for my writing-table, and my small pocket-book placed under my paper, to keep it a little steady. We have been surmounting immense fatigue and danger, ever since we left the chalet at seven. All other difficulties are nothing compared with those which surround us; and we have a descent of seven hours, not a little dangerous, to make, before we reach our inn. Still the extraordinary magnificence of the scene above, below, around us, when

one can calmly look at it, seems to recompense us for every thing. If we get back alive, however, one thing I can venture to assure you of, that the fatigue and terror are such as to prevent our ever coming up again.

*Chamouny, 8 in the evening.*—Thank God we have all returned safe. Let me now give you some notion of the day's journey. We were fourteen hours and a half on the road, and went fifty miles; ten miles on mules, and thirty on foot; which thirty were in a perpetual course of ascents, descents, sliding and jumping. After leaving the chalet on Montanvert, in the morning at seven, we descended and crossed the éboulement or vast heap of granite and sand, which intervened between that and the glacier. The path was frequently on the surface of a shelving rock of slate, *three inches wide*, with a precipice at our feet.—When we came to the glacier, or Mer de Glace itself, we had new difficulties of every kind to surmount; and in the course of our progress three vast éboulements to climb over. When we reached the summit of the mountain, which is called the Couvercle, about noon, (nine thousand two hundred feet) we were so exhausted with heat and fatigue, that we threw ourselves on the scanty grass growing on the rock, as if we were dead.—After an hour and a half's rest, and a dinner on the provisions carried for us by the guides, we set off on our return. Nothing can describe the day's journey; the simple fact of walking thirty miles on ice and rock, with declivities, crevices, gulfs, ice-torrents, &c. seems sufficiently terrific, but can convey to you no adequate idea of the real scene.

Enough, however, of our fatigues. Now, to give you some account of the Mer de Glace. It is an enormous glacier, forty-five miles long, and two wide, and rising to an inaccessible height.—We only ascended to the point commanding the finest view. It gave me the idea of a sea in a storm—suddenly frozen, or choked with snow and ice. We saw nothing but congealed waves or rather mountains of frozen water. The ice is not clear and smooth, but mixed with sand and stones, and on the surface alternately melted and re-frozen every twenty-four hours. In all this sea, changes are continually taking place, from the causes I assigned in a former letter:—a single day's rain or snow alters infallibly a variety of places. The most fearful things are the fentes, crevices, or fissures, some fifty feet wide, others just beginning to form themselves; others like a well, three or four hundred feet deep, with an impetuous torrent pouring down them, and working like a mill at the bottom; together with thousands of rivulets formed by the summer's sun on the surface. As the masses of ice descend, the superincumbent rocks and stones descend with them. These are gradually carried along; some travel five hundred feet down the immense glacier in a single year. The foot of the Mer de Glace is in the valley of Chamouny, whence the river Arveiron flows, which joins itself with the Arve, and pours into the Rhone, near Geneva.

To travel on this sea of wonders was in itself dangerous enough—a single inadvertent step might have been fatal—the extraordinary skill and experience of the guides, however, (for each per-



son has his separate one,) make accidents extremely rare. The views which we witnessed were enchanting. The deep azure of the sky in one of the finest days ever seen; the vast region of ice which the sun gilded with his rays, and the panorama of snow-clad Alps, rising stupendously all around, are really beyond my powers of description. They made us forget all our fatigues. The union and contrast of the scenes in nature apparently the most irreconcilable—and all beheld for the first time, and under the most favorable circumstances—produced an impression in which what was wonderful and pleasing had an equal share with the sublime and stupendous. In three spots I sat down, penetrated with admiration, and made my guide tell me the names of the Alps around me; I give the names as accurately as my ear could catch them: 1st, Characoux; 2d, Grappon; 3d, Mont Blanc; 4th, Le Geant; 5th, Tamla; 6th, Grand Jorasse; 7th, Petit Jorasse; 8th, Le Sehon; 9th, Les Courts; 10th, Aiguilles Rouges; 11th, Gemme Verd; 12th, Le Moine; 13th, Aiguille de Dru; 14th, La Flechiere; 15th Le Brevent.

I just add that the guides here are respectable, well-informed men; mine is called The Bird, L'Oiseau. He has been thirty-eight years a guide. The most respectable Swiss writers correspond with them. They speak very good French—the language of Chamouny is a patois. There are forty of them at Chamouny, and seventy mules. Every thing is regulated by the government, even to the order in which the guides go out. Chamouny contains near fifty hamlets, three churches, and three thousand souls. It is a Catholic priory; but our guides were intelligent, and seemingly in earnest, on the subject of religion. I talked with my own a good deal. He clearly distinguished between the essentials of religion and morals, and the ceremonies and usages of his own church. He spoke of judgment and eternity, and the sin of man, and the death of our Saviour, with some feeling. There seemed also a conscientiousness governing his mind, which gratified me a good deal. I have not myself met with any Catholics so well informed.

Chamouny, I must say, deserves all its popularity; two thousand two hundred and fifty visitors came to it last year; out of whom, about forty only went to the end of the Mer de Glace; which is some commendation of our courage, but, perhaps, not of our prudence, at least so far as I am concerned. The day has been beautiful—not a cloud.

And now may it please God to fill my heart with praise for his works, adoration of his awful majesty, gratitude for preservation, and a humble desire to see his love, his wisdom, his providence, his power, his glory in all things! I am sure religious feelings are the appropriate consequences of such a day's excursion. It is most painful to me to say, that one Englishman\* has for ever disgraced himself here by attaching to his name, in the strangers' book, an unblushing avowal of atheism. He has not, however, escaped a suitable and most severe and striking retort from one of his countrymen. He had annexed to his name

these horrid words, δημοκρατικός φιλανθρωπιστάς και αθεός.\* Immediately under them this thrilling reproof, in allusion to Psalm xiv. 1.† is now inserted, Ει μὲν τ' ἀληθὲς λέγει, μωροὶ εἰς ἐμὴν ψευδοῦνται.‡

Trient, canton of Valais, Switzerland, three o'clock, Saturday afternoon.—We set off this morning, twenty minutes before nine, and have been six hours and ten minutes coming eighteen miles. We have passed through the valleys of Chamouny, Val Valorsine, Chatelet, where Switzerland and Savoy divide, and Trient, where we now are. Often as I have expressed my astonishment at the variety of Swiss and Savoy scenery, I must repeat the same language. Certainly nothing can exceed the surprise we have felt all this morning. We have crossed a barrier called Le Tête Noire; and all the way, especially in passing the mountains, there has been nothing but wonders. Valleys sowed, as it were, with the fragments of fallen rocks; villages of romantic beauty, and of architecture the most rude; noble firs crowning the mountain sides; several glaciers descending in the ravines from the common source of the Mer de Glace; the path now sinking into the deepest valley, now rising into a frightful precipice, sometimes leading by rude stairs of rocks, at other times by torrents and sand; the whole way diversified with the ruins of falling firs, the effects of the tremendous storms of the winters, so as at places to obstruct the path; lastly, the torrent of the Trient rolling along to disgorge itself into the Rhone, whilst the alternate succession of barren scenery and cultivated meadows, like mosaic-work, in the valley and up the side of the mountains, completed the picture.

But words fail when they are attempting to describe Switzerland. One applies nearly the same terms to the valley of the Reuss, the Hoellenthal, the valley of Moutiers, the Chède, and the valleys seen to-day; and yet they are all widely different from each other; and each utterly inconceivable, except to one who has visited them for himself.

It was by this almost impracticable road of the Tête Noire, that hundreds of French emigrants escaped into the Valais, when the French invaded Savoy, in 1792. Countesses—marchionesses—carrying themselves their infants—officers—priests—in the midst of them the bishop of Nismes, a venerable old man, eighty years of age—formed this long and pitiable caravan. It rends the heart to reflect on the miseries of that period. The rule of the French on the Rhine, was followed, as I have told you, with a mixture of great good amidst the horrors unavoidable on revolutions; but their rule in Switzerland seems to have been one unmix'd calamity. Liberty, literature, morals, religion, private and public happiness, withered at their approach, and have only begun to revive since the restoration of the old state of things in that fine country. Bonaparte is, generally speaking, detested here, as much as he is in other places adored.

\* ——— Democrat, philanthropist, and atheist.

† “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”

‡ If he speaks truth, he is a fool, if not, a liar —See Christian Observer, vol. for 1824.

*Saturday evening, half-past six.*—We are just arrived at Martigny, in the Valais, twenty-seven miles from Chamouny.

D. W.

## LETTER XII.

*Great St. Bernard, Sept. 6.—Brieg,  
Sept. 10, 1823.*

Jardin of Mer de Glace—Forclaz—Bas Valais—Martigny—Deluge of the Dranse—Sunday at Martigny—Sermon—Popery—Orsieres—Lydes—Pious Admonition on Eternity—Great St. Bernard—Dogs—Monks—Chapel for Dead—Lives saved—Provost—Sion—Valais—Prayers at Great St. Bernard—Catholic Admonition.

*MARTIGNY, Bas Valais, Switzerland,  
Saturday night, Sept. 6, 1823.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I was quite mortified in sending you my last letter; it was written in such inexpressible hurries, and seemed to me, when I read it over, so sadly unconnected and incomplete. Indeed, this has been more or less the case with all my letters. I know, however, that your love will excuse the defects of my rapid accounts. I believe I did not tell you that the particular points of the Mer de Glace which we went to visit were the Couvercle and the Jardin, or garden. The Couvercle is an immensely high rock, to which you have no access but by crossing the sea of ice, as we did, and which, from its height and position, commands an unbroken view of Mont Blanc and eleven other Alps. From the Couvercle there is a twenty minutes' walk to the Jardin, which is a rock rising above the Mer de Glace. A slight stone enclosure marks out the garden, which is covered, during the brief summer, with verdure and flowers. The contrast with the snowy mantle concealing the face of nature all around, is very striking. This Jardin we did not reach; I really was overcome.

There are eighteen immense glaciers, formed from the Mer de Glace, in different ravines, and thirty smaller ones. The English gentleman, whom I reported as having ascended Mont Blanc returned safely; he accomplished the task in thirty-seven hours; but his fatigue was so great, that he was at last literally obliged to be pushed up by the guides. At the summit, a tremendous storm of snow and wind had nearly carried them all away; he remained there only five minutes, and could scarcely see any thing. His object was not science; but simply pleasure, or curiosity: he had made no preparation, had no instruments with him, and was unaccompanied by a single friend. Such exploits are regarded by every one as hazardous and useless, instead of being entitled to admiration.

My old guide (who went up with De Saussure in 1786, and was named by him L'Oiseau) tells me the accident which occurred on Mont Blanc, as I have already mentioned, in 1820, arose, as he thinks very much from the youth and inexperience of the guides: a whole day's rain and snow fell whilst the party was ascending, and made the peril of an avalanche almost certain. The oldest guide

now at Chamouny is Balma, aged seventy-six, named by De Saussure, "Mont Blanc." My friend and fellow-traveller's guide was the son of the Syndic, or chief magistrate of the village, which said Syndic we met, with a scythe on his shoulder, in primitive simplicity, going to mow, as we ascended Montanvert. The guides have seven, eight or ten francs a-day; those who go up Mont Blanc thirty or forty francs a day, and sometimes much more. They also rear and keep the mules, which are worth twenty or twenty-four Louis each (from nineteen to twenty-three pounds.) In fact, the whole apparatus of Chamouny is unequalled: there are twenty-four porters, for carrying ladies only. I suppose, during a good summer of four or five months, a guide may get eight or nine hundred francs, (about thirty-six pounds) besides his food; some much more—which is almost a fortune in Savoy. In our journey to-day to Martigny, we observed perpetual fragments of rocks scattered every where in the fields, so that the farmers collect them in great heaps in different spots, in order that the grass may have room to grow at least on some of the land. To overcome or lessen difficulties, is the perpetual task to which man is called by all the various disorders on the face of nature: and in no country so much as in Switzerland and Savoy.

When we left Trient, at four o'clock, we began to ascend the mountain Forclaz, from the summit of which, and in the descent, the view of the Valais (an immense valley, about a hundred miles long, reaching from the lake of Geneva to the Grimsel) was most enchanting: the plain with all its varied beauties, as far as Sion—the Rhone rushing through it—the Alps of the Oberland girding it around—and all illuminated with the afternoon's sun—nothing could be more exquisite. Martigny, where I am now writing, is a small town, one thousand four hundred and eighty feet above the sea (Chamouny is three thousand one hundred and fifty.) In the time of the Romans it was called Octodurum. On descending to it, we had to cross the devastations occasioned by the bursting of the river Dranse, which quite sadden my mind when I think of them. The melancholy story resembles that of Goldau, except that the loss of lives was not so considerable. It arose, I understand, from the Dranse, which rushes down the mountains about eighteen miles from Martigny, becoming first obstructed, and then stopped in its course, in the valley of Bagnes, by the falling of masses of ice from the Glacier of Getroz. A most enormous lake was thus formed, thirteen thousand feet long, and from one to seven hundred feet wide; the mean depth being two hundred; and the whole mass of water eight hundred millions of cubic feet! The country was soon alarmed at the tidings of this accumulation of waters; and a tunnel, or gallery, was cut through the barrier of ice, to facilitate the escape of the river by its usual channel. The lake was actually reduced forty-five feet; but this was not sufficient to prevent the calamity. For on the 17th June, 1818, the waters burst in a moment, without the least warning, through the barrier of ice, and rushed forth with such fury, that in one hour they had reached Martigny, eighteen miles. The torrent destroyed fifty-two houses at Champsee, and overwhelmed



a surprising number of fields, houses, barns, manufactories, &c. at Bagnes and Martigny; all was swallowed up in an instant. An entire forest was rooted up by it; and damage done to the amount of one million one hundred and nine thousand seven hundred and sixty francs of Switzerland, about two hundred thousand pounds English.

How instantaneous, as well as awful, are the judgments of God! What an uncertain, treacherous scene is this passing world! And what deductions do such events make from the pleasures of a residence in this country, however enchanting in many respects!—But I must conclude for to-night; it is past eleven, and I have been travelling hard for two days.

*Martigny, Sunday, eleven o'clock.*—Again in a Catholic town, with not a single Protestant, as I am told. This, my twelfth Sunday, is distressing to my mind. We have been to the Catholic church, (for there is no other) and heard a sermon in French; for French is the language all through the Valais. As we entered the churchyard, we saw a priest uttering some prayers, and then sprinkling water on the people who were kneeling around. On coming into the church itself, we found it crowded with people. I asked a lady to lend me a Prayer-book; but she could not tell me, nor could I find out, where the priest was reading: one thing I suspect, that but few in the church could understand a word of the prayers—those near me were muttering their allotted Pater-nosters, without any reference to the public prayers, and, when I asked them, could give me no idea where the priest was—it did not seem to enter their minds—indeed, intelligent worship was clearly no part of the object for which the congregation was assembled. The music undoubtedly was beautiful. After half an hour, the priest gave notice that the Pope was dead, and exhorted the people to pray for his soul, and to beg of God to grant him a worthy successor. He then read notices of Saints' days, and of the nativity of the Virgin Mary, which falls to-morrow.

Next, another priest, the prior, I believe, of the parish, ascended the pulpit, and delivered a sermon on our Lord's words, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." His subject was, the duty of restitution. After his introduction, I was surprised to observe, that he not only paused and kneeled solemnly down in the pulpit himself, but that the whole congregation knelt down also in secret prayer, before he entered on his discussion. The pause was peculiarly impressive, I assure you, and what I never saw before; though the intercession of the Virgin, undoubtedly, corrupted it sadly. The sermon was admirable, as an abstract explication of the particular duty of restitution, chiefly drawn from Chrysostom and Augustine. There was a degree of talent, a force, an acumen, a dignity in all the preacher said which arrested attention. The whole made a powerful impression. I saw some countrywomen who stood near me in the aisle, positively quake for fear. There was nothing of Popery, properly speaking, in it—it was a good ordinary discourse on its topic. Still, it was defective, and even unscriptural, as the instruction of a Christian divine—there was not a word as to the way of obtain-

ing pardon for our breaches of this duty; nor a word of the grace of the Holy Spirit, as necessary to assist us to keep it for the future; nor a word of the necessity of watchfulness over the corruption of the heart, as the spring of all sin and evil. Nay, he plainly said, that good works, that is, the performance of this and other moral duties, would save us, in direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the doctrine of redemption. The sermon was delivered from memory, and interspersed with striking anecdotes. When it was over, I left the church, and was surprised to find that the churchyard was filled with people, kneeling or sitting, apparently very devout, though they could neither hear nor see any thing.

But this, bad as it is, is the fairer side of Popery; if you go into the complicated system of its corruptions, you find that superstition every where fills up the place of Scriptural Christianity; and that Jesus Christ is almost unknown in his holy salvation from sin and guilt. Even what is true in Popery is spoiled by the manner in which it is disfigured or curtailed; for instance, the people are not taught the ten commandments as we have them in the Bible; but an abridgment, in which the second, that is, the commandment against idolatry and image-worship, is positively left out, and the tenth divided into two; and to which are appended what are called the commandments of the church, six, I think, in number, which are given in the same form, and with the same solemnity as those of the decalogue; and are infinitely more insisted upon by the priests, and observed by the people. The whole foundation of what the priests inculcate is, moreover, not the authority of the inspired revelation of God, but the authority of the church—they "teach for doctrines the commandments for men."

Then only consider the many incredible errors and superstitions, which they have by this means contrived to affix on real Christianity—pilgrimages, traditions, prayers for the dead, veneration of relics, intercession of saints, indulgences, dispensations, pretended miracles, purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, the denial of the cup to the laity, penances, auricular confession, image-worship, celibacy of the clergy, monastic vows, infallibility of general councils, supremacy of the Pope, implicit submission to the church, lost estate of heretics, prayers in an unknown tongue, tyranny over the conscience, virtual prohibition of the Bible. Such, avowedly, is Popery in itself; though many individual Roman Catholics know little about it, and are pious and simple-hearted Christians.

But amidst all these corruptions nothing seems to me so flagrantly unscriptural as the adoration of the image of the Virgin, and the trust reposed in her by the great mass of the people. I conceive this idolatry to be much more displeasing in the sight of God than the worship of the queen of heaven, so vehemently reprobated by the prophet Jeremiah, or the prostration of the Pagans before their idols, which St. Paul and the other apostles so indignantly condemned.\* Indeed, when I think of the peculiar jealousy of the infinitely glorious Jehovah on the subject of any

\* See Jer. xliv. and Acts of Apostles passim.

approach to idolatry, I see in this one feature of Popery, the infallible mark of an open apostasy from the faith. The extraordinary fondness of the people for this worst part of their creed, only increases this conviction in my mind.\*

O, may the time be hastened when these fatal errors shall cease, and Christ alone be again acknowledged to be Lord by all Christians! And may Protestants walk in the blessed light they enjoy, and not sink, in avoiding Popery, into the fatal gulfs of indifference, skepticism, and infidelity—the carelessness, divisions, and irreligion of professed Protestants are the scandal of Christendom. I have heard many, many worse sermons from Protestant pulpits than the one I have just told you of. May the blessed Spirit descend upon the universal church once more, and dispel Popish and skeptical darkness, as he once did Jewish and Pagan! All we want is His inspiration and His book. Send the Bible, we pray thee, O Lord, into every family, and attend it with thy sacred influences: and then truth and holiness will again flourish in the earth, the inventions of men die away, and charity become the bond of peace amongst thy disciples!

So far as I recollect, this is the first Sunday where I have found no church of any kind except the Catholic; as it is certainly the first time I have heard a French Catholic preacher. On the Grimsel there was no church at all; but every where else I have found some Protestant service, and attended it, though in German. In this town there is possibly not a creature who ever read the Bible—a large proportion of the people would not know what I meant by that sacred book—many would have even no idea that God has given an infallible written revelation of His will to man for his guidance and salvation.

*Sunday, two o'clock.*—We have just had our English divine service; never did the prayers of our truly Protestant and Reformed church appear to me more scriptural and more edifying, nor the psalms and lessons more consoling and instructive, than after having witnessed the Popish ceremonies. I expounded Luke xiii. 1—5.

*Lyddes, canton of Valais, Monday morning, Sept. 8, eleven o'clock.*—At half-past three this morning our guide came to call me. But the weather was dull; and we were so long deliberating whether to set out or not, that it was a quarter to six before we were on our mules. We have now gone sixteen miles on the way to the celebrated hospice of the Great St. Bernard. Our road has been through the valley of Entremont. For the first few miles we were passing over the

desolations occasioned by the bursting of the Dranse. It really reminded me of what the Scripture speaks of the universal deluge, when God swept away every living thing from the face of the earth. It was melancholy to see the valley, described as once so lovely, now choked and covered with masses of rocks and heaps of sand. It has been actually necessary to make a new way in many places, and in one spot to cut a gallery or tunnel, about one hundred and fifty feet long, through the granite ruin which stopped the road. It is said, that above fifty persons perished in that calamity.

As we were going through the village of Orsieres we heard voices singing in the church, and on entering, found it crowded with people—it is the *nativity of the Virgin Mary*, who is, as I have said, the chief object of the Papists' devotion. All along the road the people are going or returning from mass in crowds. In Lyddes, where we now are, the mass being over, the street is filled with idle folks. Business and labor are wholly suspended. It is curious, that all the men in these villages have coats of the same color, a snuff brown, with large cocked military hats. If the men in these towns were taught to labor, to improve their roads, repair their hedges, and cultivate their land, instead of praying to the Virgin Mary; and if the women would mend their clothes and wash their children, and keep their houses tidy, instead of making caps and petticoats for the samelady, we Protestants cannot but think they would be better employed than they now are. But every great departure from truth is attended with accumulated moral evils in one way or other.

I forgot to tell you, that at Martigny we saw a celebrated tower, built by the Romans (for Cæsar was at Octodurum;) a beautiful cascade, called the Pisse-Vache, and the fall of the Trient into the Rhone, by a crevice or fente between two rocks, so narrow as scarcely to admit of the stream to pass.

I have been much delighted here (Lyddes) with a religious admonition on the subject of eternity, printed in large letters, on a folio sheet, and hung up in the *salle-à-manger*; a similar paper is placed in every house in the parish; it quite relieves my mind to see some one great truth of Christianity plainly taught, and without superstition. I have obtained a copy, from which I give one extract—"Understand well the force of these words—a God—a moment—an eternity; a God who sees thee; a moment which flies; an eternity which awaits you:—a God whom you serve so ill; a moment of which you so little profit; an eternity which you hazard so rashly." I dwell with pleasure on this paper, because after what I have been just observing, these are the things which moderate one's depression, and teach one charity towards the persons of individual Catholics. They lead us to hope that there are in the church of Rome numbers of humble and contrite disciples of the lowly Jesus, who substantially understand and feel the awakening truths of Christianity, who put all their confidence for salvation in the atoning blood of their Saviour, and who are guided by His Spirit in the paths of true obedience—these "do not worship the BEAST, neither

\* The Virgin Mary is, beyond all comparison, more adored than the ever-blessed God—the worship paid to her is universal in all places, and by all people. After the VIRGIN, some of the principal SAINTS seem to be the most worshipped; then our SAVIOUR; and lastly God, our heavenly FATHER. "Shocking as this may appear," proceeds the writer from whom I quote, "it is too true. I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say, that throughout Italy, Spain, Portugal, and every country where the Catholic is the exclusive religion of the people, for one knee bent to God, thousands are bent before the shrines of the Virgin and the saints."†

† Rome in the nineteenth century, vol. i. 22.



his image, neither receive his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands." Rev. xx. 4.

*Hospice, au Grand St. Bernard, Monday evening, Sept. 8, eight o'clock.*—We arrived here about five, after a journey of eleven hours—twenty-eight miles. The road became more and more wild as we ascended, till at last all vegetation seemed to have ceased. We are now at the celebrated religious hospice of the monks of St. Augustine, of which you have heard so much. My curiosity is greatly excited; and as my sons could not conveniently take their journals with me, they entreat me to be as full as I can in my account to you. It is eight thousand three hundred and fourteen feet above the sea—the highest spot in Europe which is inhabited all the year round. It was founded in the year 962, by St. Bernard de Meuthon, who was the provost for forty years, and died in 1008. It is on the high Alps which separate Le Valais from Piedmont; and it was, before the Simplon and Mount Cenis' roads were made and improved by Bonaparte, one of the greatest passages between Switzerland and Italy. It is still a very considerable thoroughfare, especially for the poor Piedmontese, who cross every spring to Switzerland and France for employ. This hospice has twelve monks, and six domestics, constantly resident to receive the poor without payment, and succor the distressed traveller. They are bound to entertain these travellers for three days, and in case of illness, to nurse and attend them till they recover.

The domestics go out almost every morning during the winter, on different routes, to search for pilgrims who may have lost their way. They take with them dogs of a Spanish breed, called the St. Bernard dogs, very large and powerful, who have a sagacity so unerring, that they discover and follow the tracks on the mountains, though covered with eight feet of snow. They go before the domestics, clearing a path with their heads and feet; and as soon as a traveller is near, they invariably smell him out, and lead the servant to him. The domestic is furnished with bread and wine; and sometimes a dog is sent out alone, with a basket tied to his neck, containing these necessities. The number of lives saved is incredible. Last winter an old man was found quite frozen, whom they restored to life. Two other men had been carried away by an avalanche of snow, and would undoubtedly have perished but for the hospice. One single dog has saved the lives of five persons; his name is Jupiter; there are four others, named Lion, Turk, Pallas, and Castor. We had them called to us, that we might caress them, for they are good-natured and generous animals. In the course of last year twelve thousand travellers passed some time at the hospice. Last night there was four or five hundred persons who slept here. It was a double festival. All the chambers, halls, passages, floors, were crowded with guests. The snow falls almost all the year; it freezes commonly in the morning, even during the height of summer; and the lake behind the house is frequently frozen over even in July. This afternoon the thermometer was 44; whilst yesterday at Martigny it was nearly 80. There are not above ten days in the year when the sky is perfectly clear through-

out the day. Thirty horses and mules are employed nearly half the year, in fetching wood from the forests, twelve or fifteen miles from the convent.

Close to the hospice was formerly a Roman temple, dedicated to Jupiter Penninus; on the site of which various antiquities are continually found. We were shown a large collection of them—amongst which were many medals of great value. When we first arrived, a monk, in a loose habit of black, buttoned down close in front, with a black cap, received us and showed us first into the dining-room, and then to our chambers. Soon after another monk walked out with us, and pointed out the chief beauties around. At one place he showed us the division between Switzerland and Italy; and made us tread at the same time on both countries. He bid us mark several spots where the dogs had discovered frozen travellers, and had been the means of saving them: one he particularly pointed out, where they had discovered a peasants family perishing in the snow; upon which one of these noble animals had contrived to take up an infant, and place it on its back, and then hastened to the hospice, to fetch persons who might rescue the unhappy parents. The story affected us almost to tears.

It is not only the frosts and snow which create the danger, but the dreadful storms of wind, which come on quite unexpectedly and carry away the traveller. The Italian courier passed, a few winters ago, from Aoste to the Great St. Bernard, on a very inclement afternoon. The monks endeavored to persuade him to abandon all thought of going forward. He was determined to proceed. They then sent two servants with him, to direct him on his way. As these did not return when they were expected, another domestic, with three dogs, was dispatched in search of them. The dogs refused to move, though they were the best of the whole number: this was the sure sign that extreme danger was on the road. However, life was at stake, and the dogs were at length forced to go. That night neither men nor dogs returned; and some days afterwards they were all discovered buried under an avalanche, about half a league from the convent, perfectly dead. To support their expenses, the monks in the summer entertain visitors, who make presents to the institution. Last Wednesday, forty strangers, mostly English, breakfasted here.

At seven o'clock this evening the bell rang, and we were ushered into the *salle-à-manger*. I was all eagerness to observe their manners and customs. All the monks, or chanoines, as they call themselves, were present. Latin prayers were said with much devotion; the English staring.—The monks each placed one or two of us between them at the table, and an excellent supper was served up—abundant without extravagance; it consisted of soup, various hashes, and some game. The wine light, but good.

The conversation was most friendly and agreeable. I was placed next the provost. I conceived that our hosts might be men of some theological learning, and turned the conversation to the subject of religion, and to the doctrine of Augustine, the founder of their order. I told them I agreed with that great writer in his defence of

the doctrine of grace and his opposition to Pelagius, and generally in his exposition of Christian truths and duties. I added, that St. Augustine was esteemed by Protestants as one of the great lights of the church; and was constantly appealed to in their articles and confessions. The provost immediately asked me if I was a minister of religion, and what became of my parish during my absence. On my telling him that I was a master of arts of the university of Oxford, that I had been ordered to travel abroad on account of my health, and had committed my duties at home to a valuable and pious fellow-clergyman, who would discharge them with conscientious fidelity, he pursued his inquiries no further. There was an intense curiosity apparent in all he said. I assured him that all good Protestants loved their Catholic brethren who, like Nicole, and Pascal, and Fenelon, believed truly in our Saviour, and obeyed simply and humbly his commands. I added, that I hoped the time would soon come when the Holy Spirit, being poured out on Christendom, a general agreement on essential TRUTH would prevail, and a holy CHARITY as to non-essential. I could not discover, however, from his replies, that he was much acquainted with these topics. Practical benevolence seems the only business of these worthy monks, whose early education and secluded habits must leave them to the full influence of first impressions. One of them, however, on the other side of the table observing my conversation with the provost, began to talk with me on the French preachers, and the striking sermons of Brydayne, just published. He agreed with me, in admiring the fine, affecting appeals which abound in this writer; but still I did not observe any distinct ideas of devotion or spiritual feeling in what he said, even in the sense of the Roman Catholic writers, though I was really quite delighted with him and my other hosts, and anxious to judge of them in the most favorable way.

The provost afterwards told me that, in the year 1800, Bonaparte passed the Great St. Bernard. He had sent over thirty thousand men from France to Italy, with artillery and cavalry, who were three weeks in crossing. The cannons required sixty or seventy men each to drag them up the ridge. Many horses perished in the precipices. He came himself afterwards on a mule, for which he gave thirty louis at Martigny; it stumbled on the way, and, but for the guide catching him in his arms, he would have fallen down the precipice. He afterwards rewarded the man for his promptness, who was known ever after in the village by the name of Bonaparte. Napoleon staid two hours and a half at the hospice; he was dark and thoughtful; said only a few words; ate of the provisions he had brought with him; accepted a little of their wine; appeared lost in silence; asked if they knew the strength of a neighboring fort; went down to Italy, and fought the battle of Marengo! He treated the convent as well as he could; but the monks lost every thing during the war, even to their linen and furniture.

After supper, Latin grace was again said; the provost beginning, and the other monks making responses. We retired to our rooms directly after supper. I conceive there are few institutions so valuable, in a humane point of view, as this. It

is painful to think, that some impostors went about Europe a few years since collecting alms, as they pretended, for the hospice. They came to England and were at Oxford. They were Piedmontese. Efforts were made by many benevolent persons to raise subscriptions for them; but the fraud was at length detected. The provost requested us to state, that the hospice never collects contributions, except in their own country, Switzerland. I just add, that a regular journal of the state of the weather at the hospice, with the principal events that occur, and especially the lives saved, is published once a month in one of the periodical works at Geneva, I think the "Bibliothèque Universelle." It is generally observed, that when the thermometer is 62° at Geneva, it is 32° here. It is impossible to keep oneself warm. My friend even found his breath a good deal affected this evening. You would be amused to see me at this moment sitting trembling with cold in my small Popish chamber, attempting to write at an old wooden desk, affixed to the wall by hinges which have this instant given way and overturned my paper, ink, and whole apparatus. But I must hurry to rest, after such a fatiguing day; it is past eleven, and I was awake between three and four this morning, and have been writing now nearly two hours. I wish my dear Ann and Eliza could have been here. My sweet little girl would have so liked to have seen these fine dogs, which are almost as large as heifers, and live upon a sour sort of soup, made on purpose for them; their fame is spread throughout the world, and pictures of them are multiplied. One of them, who saved twelve or thirteen persons, was stuffed after his death, and is now at Bern. I saw a beautiful engraving at Paris, of the dog in the act of saving the infant before mentioned.

*Lyddes, half-past twelve, Tuesday morning.*—We had a simple breakfast provided for us this morning by the monks at St. Bernard. We visited the chapel, which is neat and commodious; and my friend and I, between us, dropped, with delight, five louis d'or into the poor's box. The hospice itself was built in 1550, and has been enlarged several times. The walls are enormously thick—the ground floor is all arched; and the walls are strengthened by strong buttresses on the side of the lake. In the chapel is a monument erected to the memory of General Dessaix, by Bonaparte. Our chambers were convenient—the furniture old—the beds good—the windows with double glass sashes—crucifixes in the rooms. The provost, or head of the convent, together with the prior, breakfasted with us; the rest of the monks had each a pewter dish of soup, which they ate standing. We again saw our friends the dogs before we went; two are of a brown speckled color, and three white, with fawn ears; their heads are very large; enormous teeth; necks thick, and with flesh hanging down like a bull's; front feet amazingly strong; they stand very high upon their legs; the haunches and hind legs are like those of hounds; they add to all their other qualities, that of being excessively gentle.

Thus have we visited this remarkable establishment, which has afforded us more pleasure, perhaps, than any thing we have seen during our



whole journey. Two or three hundred years of uniform and laborious beneficence has raised this convent to an unequalled height of celebrity. The monks seldom are able to live many years at St. Bernard. The provost was going down to the lower lands to-day. The hospice is very damp for a considerable part of the year. Some attempts are making to raise a fund for rebuilding it. Winter will set in in ten days. Sometimes all the domestics, all the dogs, and all the monks, are out in the middle of the night for hours, when travellers are in particular danger; and it has happened that an avalanche, as I have said, has carried them all away, without the possibility of their being succored.

One building which the monks showed us was the chapel of the Bone-House—an apartment where the bodies found in the snow are deposited, in order to be owned by their friends. The good monks perform the funeral service, indiscriminately, over all that they find; and the cold is so intense, that it is many years before the bodies are dried up, for decomposition seldom takes place. We looked through the sad grating of the room, and distinctly saw the heaps of bodies, like mummies, covering all the place; it was a melancholy sight. The benevolence and courage of this kind fraternity amount, therefore, to a sort of devotion quite extraordinary. This is the only convent which Bonaparte spared. It is curious, that by this same route, by which Bonaparte invaded Italy, Hannibal is supposed, by some, to have led the Carthaginian forces, for a similar design, two thousand years ago. Such are the vicissitudes of human glory and ambition!

*Martigny, six o'clock, Wednesday morning.*—We returned here last night at seven, and found one of our carriages sent, as we had requested, to meet us from Lausanne. Thus has our second little tour to Chamouny of eight days terminated. The weather has been most fine the whole time. We have seen some of the greatest curiosities in Switzerland and Savoy: the Valley of the Cluse, Chamouny, Mont Blanc, the Mer de Glace, and, above all, the Great St. Bernard. We might now return to Lausanne in a day; but we are tempted to make a detour into Northern Italy; we are only about three days' journey from Milan; whither our kind fellow-traveller wishes us to accompany him, on his way to Rome. We are going off then, not on mules, but in the carriage with post horses, towards this splendid city. May God be pleased to direct, over-rule, and bless this extension of our journey, to the further instruction of our minds and establishment of our healths!

*Sion, Wednesday noon, September 10.*—This is the capital of the Valais—two thousand five hundred inhabitants. A most ancient city; the Romans found it already a considerable place, wher, they first penetrated into Helvetia. We arrived here at half-past ten to dinner. The road has been beautiful, between the rocks which crown each side of the valley. Any one of this range would form an object of extreme interest; but we are here so surrounded with beauty and grandeur, that it is impossible to dwell on the details.

*Brieg, at the foot of the Simplon, seventy miles from Martigny, seven o'clock, Wednesday evening.*—We have arrived here, after twelve hours' driving. We have come post. By voituriers we should have been two days and a half. At Sion, where we dined, I went to see the cathedral and the church of the Jesuits, (for they have been restored,) who have the direction of the education here; they have built a new church within these three years. I met several of the young Jesuits in the streets. We eyed each other with mutual surprise. They were quite young men, florid, intelligent, firm in their love. They wear the clerical dress. The most striking proof perhaps of their spirit is, that there is not one bookseller in Sion; no, nor is there one in all the canton of the Valais, though containing a hundred thousand souls. The fact seems incredible; but I was solemnly assured of it by the printer at Sion, to whom the guide took me when I inquired for the booksellers. This printer, by the by, is allowed to work only under the direction of the Jesuits, and prints nothing but books of Catholic devotion.

After leaving Sion we passed the Diablerets Mountains, where eboulements are often falling: two in 1714 and 1749, ravaged the neighboring valley. An old man lived three months there in his overwhelmed cottage, before he could effect his escape. The agriculture of this lovely valley is sadly neglected; all is left to wild nature. The Rhone is not banked; the lands are not drained; a large part of the valley is a marsh. The vines are, however, so far attended to, that terraces are formed for their creeping up the mountains to an extreme height. The number of villages and private houses built in the most romantic situations, on the sides of the mountains, is very great, and strikingly beautiful. They seem like nests built by birds. On the utmost heights are often raised small chapels; to which processions are made in crowds, on certain festivals, by the poor superstitious people of this canton.

On the whole, this valley, the largest in Switzerland, reaching from Geneva to the glacier of the Rhone, and bounded by chains of diversified mountains, with snowy Alps perpetually rising above them, fertile beyond conception, and watered by the Rhone, has more than equalled all our expectations, except as the folly and vice of man have impeded the bounties of a kind Providence. The inhabitants are proverbially indolent, negligent, and dirty. No branch of trade flourishes.—Even as to agriculture, they are far behind their neighbors. Their fertile plains are left exposed to the inundations of the Rhone. The canton is exclusively Catholic. The doctrine of the Reformers had gained many adherents in the sixteenth century; but early in the seventeenth they were all banished. Education is neglected.—Every thing seems on the worst footing.

The day has been most fine, and nothing but the dust has annoyed us. The goitres now are quite distressing; we have seen some literally hanging down upon the breasts of the sufferers. The thermometer has been about 80°. We have had to regret the indisposition of our friend, who has been attacked with pain in his face; my dear sons and myself are quite well.

May God fill our hearts with some sense of his manifold bounties and goodness! The lessons we have the opportunity of learning are most numerous and most important. This deplorable canton speaks for itself to all who are in love with Jesuits and bad government.

I am your affectionate

D. W.

#### NOTICE OF PRAYERS AT GREAT ST. BERNARD.

A friend has given me a copy of the following beautiful hymn to the Holy Spirit, which he translated from the Latin prayer-book of the Great St. Bernard, probably composed from some of the writings of St. Augustine, the founder of their order:

"Come, Holy Spirit, and send from heaven a ray of thy light! Come, thou father of the poor, thou giver of gifts, thou light of the world, the blessed comforter, the sweet guest of the soul, and its sweet refreshment; thou, our repose in labor, our coolness in heat, our comfort in affliction!—Oh, most blessed Spirit, fulfil the hearts of thy faithful people! Without thy influence there is nothing in man which is not weakness and guilt. Oh, cleanse that which is sordid; bedew that which is dried up; heal that which is wounded; bend that which is stubborn; cherish in thy bosom that which is cold; guide that which is wandering; and grant unto thy servants, putting their trust in thee, the merit of thy righteousness; grant them final salvation, grant them everlasting joy! O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee!"

In this sublime and affecting prayer, there is not an expression in which the devout Protestant would not heartily join, except, perhaps, that which implores of the Holy Spirit "the merit of his righteousness," which savors of the sentiment embraced by St. Augustine, and held till the period of the Reformation, that justification was a habit of grace infused into the soul—an error, however, which, when united with an exclusive trust in the forgiving mercy of God, through the death of Christ, for everlasting salvation, cannot be thought to be fundamental.

I add another prayer from the same offertory, free from any savor of superstition; the expressions concerning our Lord's body being warranted by the terms of Scripture, though they may be open to abuse, and are, in fact, abused, as we know, by the Catholic interpreters:

"O blessed Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that thy most holy name may be the last word that my mouth shall ever utter! O gracious Jesus, I pray that thy most sacred body may be my last refreshment, and the sustenance which I shall enjoy and feed upon for ever! O gracious Lord, I pray that my last sigh may be the last pain I shall endure to all eternity! O gracious Lord, I pray that thy most blessed face may be the first object which my soul shall behold, when it is released from this mortal body! O gracious Lord, I pray that thou thyself wouldest be my guide and my companion from this land of exile, to my eternal home and country! Amen!"

#### LETTER XIII.

*Simplon, Sept. 11.—Milan, Sept. 14, 1823.*

Brieg—Simplon—Road—Persal—Descent into Italy—Domo d'Osola—Priests—Contrast between Switzerland and Italy—Lago Maggiore—Borromean Isles—Colossal Statue of Borromeo—Milan—Scale of Vegetation on Alps—Marble Cathedral—St. Ambrose—St. Austin.

BRIEG, 296, miles from *Lusanne, Sept. 11, 1823, Thursday morning, half-past 5.*

THIS town of Brieg, my dear sister, is of considerable extent; I should think it has three hundred houses; it is about two thousand feet above the sea. It is one of the most beautiful spots in all the Valais. The Jesuits' church is conspicuous, being covered with a brilliant green stone, striped with bright yellow. The houses of the place are tiled with a white slate glittering like silver. When the sun gilds the mica-roofs, the view from the windows of the inn, which is on a hill, is quite novel. It is here that the celebrated road of the Simplon properly begins, though it may be said to commence as far back as Geneva; the road from Geneva to Brieg having been widened and improved, at the same time that it was carried on over the Alps to Italy. Simplon is the name of a village on a mountain of the Haut Valais, in the chain of Alps between Switzerland and Italy. The road was begun by Bonaparte in 1801; he employed thirty thousand men upon it for four or five years. The side next to the Valais was executed by French engineers; that next to Italy, by Italian. These last had the greatest difficulties to surmount, from the hardness of the rocks. It is twenty-five feet wide everywhere—a prodigious work, rivaling the labors of ancient Rome. The highest point is six thousand one hundred and seventy-four feet above the sea, and the ascent is only of about two inches and a half in six feet, a rise so gradual as to be easy to the heaviest wagons.

*Persal on the Simplon, half past 10.*—We have now come the first stage on this celebrated road, which is gentle in its rise beyond all conception; and as smooth as our Bath road. The plan in forming it was adjusted with such skill and care, by following the sides of mountains, as always to preserve the same gradual ascent. Large portions of the road were made by blowing up rocks, and building terraces from the valleys, with bridges over the ravines. Granite stones are placed at short intervals on each side, with strong railing on the edge of precipices. The prospects, as you ascend, are soft and pleasing. The valleys and the town of Brieg stretching before the view at an immense distance below, varying with the different turns of the scenery, form a new and enchanting picture at every tenth step. The mountains of firs form a sort of back ground. The conception and execution of this road, reflect an honor on the name of Bonaparte, which all his military schemes never deserved. Every traveller of every country, forgetting his ambitious motives, applauds the ingenuity, hardihood, and usefulness of the enterprise.

*Domo d'Osola, in the Valley of Osola, six o'clock, Thursday evening.*—We have now passed the re-



mainder of the Simplon. It really rises in my estimation. Not only is the road of a convenient width and excellent smoothness, but ten or twelve refuges are built for travellers overtaken by bad weather. In one of these we dined, at half-past ten. We had boiled mutton, roast veal, potatoes, salad, and very good light wine for four of us, for eight francs, about eighteen pence a piece. In continuing our route we had the Alps constantly in view. There are six or eight tunnels, or galleries, cut through solid rocks, to form part of the road; one gallery is six hundred and eighty-three feet long, with enormous windows opened in the rude granite to give light on the path. I observed at another place four beautiful cascades falling down the cliffs, which are carried under the road by aqueducts. Bonaparte began a new hospice: it has fourteen windows in front, and five on each side. The work has stood still since 1814. An immense pillar of granite lies neglected along the road, in another part, designed for his triumphal arch at Milan. It attests, in the most affecting manner, the total change which his fall instantly occasioned. Not a creature has cared to remove it out of the way, or apply it to any other purpose. We were six hours and a half in attaining the highest point of the road. The zig-zags which it takes, to preserve the gentle ascent, are surprising.

After passing the village of Simplon, we began to descend towards Italy through a valley magnificently and sublimely rude. The horrors of the impending rocks—the immense masses broken off by the storms, and lying scattered around—the perpendicular crags of their lofty sides—united with the infinite variety which reigns in every part, really penetrated my mind with astonishment; accustomed as I have lately been to unusual grandeur in the works of nature. Then the descent is so gradual, that we drove a fast trot all the way. In short, it would be worth while taking a journey to see this country, if there were no beautiful road; and it would be almost worth while taking the journey to see the road, if there were no beautiful country: the combination of the two is unequalled, as I suppose, in the world. At four we entered Italy, properly so called, for on the continent, Savoy is commonly considered as part of Italy. The name of the first Italian village is San Marco.

The plain of the Valley of Osola is beautiful. It is the first Italian plain we have seen; it differs from the Swiss, in its greater fertility, softness, and beauty; the meadows are more rich, the trees in finer verdure. The town of Domo d'Osola has about three thousand inhabitants. There is no bookseller in the place—I mark this fact, where it occurs, as implying a thousand consequences—the public mind is bound down in imperturbable ignorance and self-satisfaction. As we passed Isella, the second village in Italy, our baggage was searched; and the officer told us plainly, the objects he looked after were books of religion and politics—morals are left to themselves.

On driving into the town, I was surprised to see priests, in their peculiar dress, but somewhat shabbily attired, standing about idly, or sitting in the market place, at the doors of cabarets, in company with the common people. Their jovial, careless sort of look, struck me as characteristic of the

manners of too many of that order of persons in Italy. The chief church here is of modern Greek architecture; there are three altogether, and about fifteen priests. A convent of Capuchins, suppressed by Napoleon, has just been restored. When we asked the innkeeper what curiosities there were in the town, he said there was only a Calvary—a chapel, or temple, on some mountain, with a superstitious representation of our Saviour's passion—a trait perfectly conclusive as to the general state of opinions and information in the place.

We are now in Italy. But, how fallen! How melancholy is it to think of the actual condition of this queen of nations! Ignorance, poverty, indolence, vice, superstition, misery, are but too visible on all sides. Half the time, in fact, which God assigned to man for labor, is consumed in superstitious festivals of saints; whilst the one day of sacred rest is desecrated to folly and sin. All this is the more deplorable, when compared with the beauty of the country itself. The air is delicious—the balmy atmosphere soothes and enchants you. Then the recollections also of past glory rush upon the mind. Italy is associated with all our earliest learning. It is the country of poets, and artists, and orators, and warriors. Scarcely a spot is to be found that has not been the theatre of some celebrated action. The stupendous ruins which adorn it, impress the mind with lofty ideas of the skill and perseverance of man, and at the same time teach us the perishableness and vanity of all his works. The towns are famed for the conspicuous characters to whom they have given birth; whilst Rome—once the mistress of the Pagan world; then the first see of the Christian church; and lastly, the source of the gross western apostasy from the faith—gives a deep interest to the whole country where it is situated. I confess, a mixed feeling possesses my mind, for which I cannot distinctly account. Curiosity, surprise, veneration, sorrow, fear, compassion, all have a part. Though I am not going to Rome, yet I seem to share all the emotions of travelling for the first time in Italy—and the impression is deeper from the country I have just left.

In Switzerland, all was the grandeur and majesty of nature; in Italy, it is the splendor and perfection of architecture. In the one, the towns were of themselves nothing; in the other, they are every thing. In Switzerland, the modern efforts for religion and liberty, and the fine spirit of the inhabitants, attract your chief attention; in Italy, the ancient memorials of past power, and the remains of science and literature. In Switzerland, you connect the works of nature with the men; in Italy, the men with the works, not of nature, but of art. The Swiss have for five centuries been raising their poor and desolate country, by their industry and good government, to be the praise of Europe; the Italians have for twelve centuries been depressing, by their indolence and bad administration, the most fertile and luxuriant, to be its reproach. Switzerland, in short, is the land of freedom and of the purest form of Christianity; Italy, of slavery and of the most corrupt state of the Christian doctrine. But I am indulging in an endless strain of reflection.

To return. The vines are here very different, in point of luxuriance and beauty, from those of

the Rhine or of Switzerland; they are raised on treillises, often of granite, and always in regular order, high enough to form arbors; so that the grass or corn grows beneath, and the field is one bower. Where this is not the case, you have beech, maple, or peach trees hung with vines, joined from tree to tree by branches, suspended on ropes; at other places, the terraces rise, loaded with vines, all up the mountain-side. The view of the rich black grapes, hanging under the treillis-work, is incomparably beautiful. We were, perhaps, a little partial in our judgment, because the grapes of Switzerland, when we left it, were as hard as stones; whereas here the branches hang in rich, ripe clusters everywhere, so that our postillion, as he walks up a hill, or a boy conducting us to a sight, gathers large bunches unasked, and brings them to us. I conceive, that Italy must be something like to ancient Palestine, though doubtless much inferior to it.

*Arona, 41 miles from Domo d'Osola, 8 o'clock, Friday evening, Sept. 12.*—The weather is most propitious. We have had only one wet day (August 31) since the storm on the Righi: to-day there has been a soft delightful temperature, without excessive heat. We set off at seven this morning, and have been travelling a great way by the margin of the lovely Italian lake, called Lago Maggiore; its waters are smooth as a mirror, so as to reflect every thing on its banks; towns on each side, mountains in varied outline, crowning the prospect—the near scenery soft and lovely, the distant bold and magnificent. It is, in some parts, one thousand eight hundred feet deep. Eels abound in it, of the weight of thirty pounds.

From Baveno, we embarked to visit the Borromeo Isles, so called from the ancient Italian family which possesses and has adorned them.—They are two, Isola Bella and Isola Madre. The principal one is a mile and a half round; originally a barren rock, but now covered with gardens, grottos, and terraces, raised on arches and arcades. In some parts the arches are ten stories high, one over another, raised from the lower part of the rock to the highest terrace; which is one hundred and twenty feet above the surface of the lake, and forty feet square. A pegasus placed on the summit gives the whole island something of the appearance of a pyramid. The aspect of these arches and terraces from the road was most beautiful—there was something quite novel in the view of the mass of gardens and buildings rising at once out of the water, as by enchantment.

Nor were we disappointed when we came nearer. We saw in the gardens, cedars, myrtle trees, cypresses of enormous girth, aloes, Egyptian grapes, serpentine cucumbers a yard and a half long; a plant from the Canaries, which grew twenty-four feet high in thirty-two days; but the most abundant species of trees were the citrons, which lined the walls of the terraces, and had large cabbages planted at their roots, to protect them from the intense heat of the sun. There were also vines, olives, and orange trees in profusion. More than thirty thousand oranges and citrons are gathered every year. In the time when the gardens are in flower the sweet perfume spreads for a considerable distance over the

lake. The fragrance was most gratifying to-day, though it is as late in the year as the middle of September. Fountains and statues refresh and adorn every part of the grounds. In short, these islands are the model of perfection in their way—which way, indeed, has been out of taste for about a century, and is undoubtedly stiff and unnatural; but still, they reward one richly for the trouble of a visit. Some of the prospects from the islands, on the lake and the bordering villages and mountains, are exquisite. The heights of the Simplon and the peaks of Mount Rosa and Saint Gothard may be discerned from them. The Borromeo Palace, in each island, is an emblem of Italian finery and negligence. The wings of the principal one are completed: but the body is nothing but bare walls. I understand this is almost general in Italy; the nobles build, or rather begin to build, immense houses—they half finish them—they soon allow them to decay and go to ruin; a complete well-appointed mansion is rare in this country.

In approaching this town of Arona, where I am now writing, we ascended a hill to examine a colossal statue of cardinal Charles Borromeo, an eminent benefactor to Milan, and founder of the Sunday schools still existing there; he died in the year 1584. The statue itself is seventy-two feet high—twelve times the natural size, and five or six times as high, I think, as that of the duke of Bedford in London—the pedestal thirty-six feet. The arm is twenty-eight feet long, the head twenty feet round, the nose two feet seven inches long, the circuit of the cloak fifty-four feet, &c. &c.—The attitude is that of one blessing the people.—The right hand is raised gently, the left clasps the Breviary;\* (which is thirteen feet high) the head is bare; the countenance most benignant; the garments those of a cardinal, in easy, flowing drapery. So admirably natural is the whole, that you have no idea of its enormous dimensions on first looking at it. It is curious that we thought we discovered a likeness between the cardinal and the present count Borromeo, whom we happened to meet as we landed on his island: the resemblance in the nose seemed to us to be striking. The head, feet, and hands of this Colossus are made of bronze; the body of copper; the pedestal is of stone. There are no steps within the pedestal, as you might expect; but my sons had to ascend by a ladder from the outside to the part of the statue where the fold of the cloak falls.—Under this bronze fold they entered, and then ascended to the head of the figure, and sat with ease in the nostrils. A stone pillar with iron spikes fixed in it, by way of stairs, runs up the interior of the statue to support it. I really quite trembled as they went up the quivering ladder of forty-eight steps; and when they entered the statue, and afterwards looked out to me from a kind of ooor which opened in the back of it, a hundred feet above my head, (half as high as the Monument in London) I was really alarmed. Thank God, they came down safe.

The inns in Italy are contrived for delight.—We are now sitting with our windows open:

\* So the guide-books call it—for my part, I hope it is the BIBLE.



flower-pots are placed in every nook; grapes hang all around in rich clusters; open galleries and platforms conduct from one part of the house to another; the floors are all brick or stone; the rooms are lofty; and if they were but clean, all would be well. We have now the finest fruit at breakfast and dinner, and good light wines at a franc a bottle. The people are of a copper color. The women wear handkerchiefs over their heads like veils. At Domo d'Ossola, the streets had two narrow slips of smooth flags in the middle, for the wheels of carriages, the rest being rough pebbles. We are under stricter police laws than ever; our passports are sent for at every town, as soon as we enter; and we have a license for post-horses, which we have to show at each stage. Such is the liberty of the Sardinian and Austrian dominions in Italy.

There are about three thousand people in this town of Arona, six churches and forty priests, with sixty monks; no bookseller—compare this with the state of English towns of the same extent—Banbury for instance; where there is one church and one clergyman, but large schools, numerous benevolent institutions, and perhaps a dozen booksellers. Italy swarms with monks and ignorance.

The Borromeo motto is "*Humilitas*;" which is inscribed even on each flower-pot of the superb garden in the islands, and on the picture of the Ascension of St. Borromeo to heaven, in the church of what is called the Sacred Mount, where the stupendous statue is placed; on the ascent to which Mount, by the by, there are six or more chapels dedicated to the same saint. I asked the waiter here, quite accidentally, if they were all Catholics at Arona; he looked at me with astonishment, and said, yes:—perceiving his surprise, I told him I was an Englishman and a Protestant, and that the English believed in Jesus Christ their Saviour, though they did not believe in the Pope; at which the man seemed more astonished still.—Such slight circumstances as these, serve at least to betray the habits of thought in the common people in Italy. All is sealed up in impenetrable ignorance and superstition. I suppose, if I had attempted ever so mildly to convince him of the errors of Popery, I should soon have heard of it from the police.

*Milan, Saturday evening, half-past 8, Sept. 13, 44 miles from Arona, about 1950 miles from London.*—We set off this morning at half-past seven, and came to Sesto Calende, on the Tesin. It was near this town that Hannibal is thought to have conveyed his elephants across the river and defeated the Romans, three hundred years before Christ.

The Lombardo-Venetian kingdom of the Emperor of Austria begins here. Happily our passports were signed by the Austrian ambassador before we left Bern, or we should have had to retrace our steps; several Englishmen, for want of this formality, have actually been compelled to return. We dined at Cascina at half-past eleven, and entered Milan at half-past three. The country through which we passed is flat, and wretchedly cultivated, but fertile. The pastures are often excellent. The grass is regularly cut four times a year. The tenants pay no rent in money

for their farms, but divide the returns with their landlord. Ploughing is performed by oxen. The agricultural instruments are deplorable; and the inhabitants are generally poor. Many of the churches have small square towers, very lofty, with six or seven stories, and windows in each.—The towns are slovenly and dirty beyond all description: one would think there was scarcely a comfortable house in them.

In coming down to Sesto, we had a noble view of mount Rosa, with its perpetual snows, which appeared higher than any Alp we had seen, on account of the low situation of the plain from which we viewed it. It is with regret we took leave, for a time, of these magnificent scenes. I should have told you, that in Savoy, the women were the chief laborers in the fields. I saw, several times, a plough guided by a woman; who with one hand held the plough, and with the other drove a miserable lean cow, which drew it through the dusty land.

I will just say, about the Alps generally (for I expect now to have to quit the subject,) that the line where the snow rests on them perpetually is from eight thousand four hundred and fifty, to nine thousand one hundred feet above the level of the sea; the line where FIR-TREES and FLOWERS flourish, six thousand: the lowest line where CORN will grow, three thousand seven hundred and fifty; and where VINES can be cultivated, one thousand nine hundred and fifty feet. Thus the same mountains exhibit every variety of product. Their heads are craggy, inaccessible, without the possibility of vegetation; their bases are covered with rich corn-fields, or luxuriant pastures; the middle consists of pastures less productive, interspersed with a great variety of plants. The summits, in fact, are doomed to all the rigors of an Icelandic winter; whilst at their feet, one enjoys the warmth of an Italian sun.

There is something very instructive in this scale of vegetation—for I must moralize for a moment. The degree of the sun's heat regulates every thing in the natural world. All is sterile as it recedes from it. May we not say, in like manner, as to the moral world, that fruitfulness in holy love and obedience is just in proportion as our principles and habits place us under the vivifying influences of grace? The nearer we approach to the centre of all warmth and life, the more fruitful: as we recede, all withers and dies. My main quarrel with Popery and with merely nominal Protestantism is, that they conceal and exclude the genial light and heat of the "Sun of Righteousness," and substitute a cold, freezing superstition or indifference in its stead. Christ our Lord is to the moral world, what the glorious orb of day is to the natural—the source and fountain of life and growth and joy.

But to return to our route to Milan.—We were much surprised to find more than one large church built in the midst of the fields, with not a house near; and, therefore, apparently for the travelling peasants in passing from town to town. This may, perhaps, be an excusable trait of superstition; a trait of another kind we discovered at dinner. The waiter asked us three francs each for some cold meat, wine, and fruits; we hesitated. Upon which an English gentleman told

us we had only to give him two francs each, and one for himself, and he would be content; the rogue took the money without a word.

Milan, where we now are, is considered, next to Rome and Naples, one of the largest cities of Italy.\* It was the ancient Mediolanum; and was founded as early as Tarquinius Priscus, 670 years before Christ. It was the capital of Bonaparte's kingdom of Italy, and is now the joint-capital with Venice† of the Italian dominions of the emperor of Austria. It has nearly one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants; the outer wall is ten miles in circuit, and it is one of the very few great cities not built on a river. The Adda and Tesin, however, communicate with it by canals. We are at the Royal Hotel, and are extremely well accommodated. The landlord tells us that his servants have, during the last nine years, perfectly learned the English taste.

Immediately after our arrival, we hastened to see the celebrated cathedral, built of white marble, the grandest and most imposing specimen of Gothic architecture now remaining; and the finest church in Europe, after St. Peter's at Rome, and St. Paul's at London. It is also the largest in Italy, next to St. Peter's. It is four hundred and forty-nine feet long, two hundred and seventy-five wide, and two hundred and thirty-eight high. It was begun in 1386, and is yet unfinished; but, strange to say, Bonaparte did more to complete it in a few years, than had been done in three hundred previous—or than will be done, perhaps, in three hundred to come.

This noble edifice, as you first approach it, bursts upon the eye most majestically. The façade is magnificent, and the three other sides are hardly inferior. The immense mass of perfectly white marble, of which it is built, its amazing size, the labor manifest in its several parts, and the exquisite finish of the ornaments and statues which adorn it, fill the mind of a stranger with admiration. We gained the best idea of the beauties of its alabaster walls by going up on the roof, which is itself covered with slabs of marble. We then saw quite closely the fret-work, the carving, and the sculpture, and marked the grace of the figures, and the symmetry and elegance of each pinnacle. Above the dome there rises an elegant tower, like an obelisk. We walked up stairs of marble, we leaned on balustrades of marble, we passed through galleries of marble; whilst the walls were literally studded with statues, and every niche filled with its archbishop or saint—there are in all more than four thousand figures. The fact is, as marble is obtained with ease and in great abundance in Italy, and admits of nicer workmanship than stone, the full benefit has been taken of these advantages. The interior of the building, however, is obscured with dust and smoke, and incense, and burning lamps; so that it does not look nearly so handsome as the outside. The smallness of the windows, and the

paintings on the glass, also tend to increase the general gloomy appearance.

The statue of St. Bartholomew, within the cathedral, is considered as a chef-d'œuvre—but the subject is frightful—the martyr is represented just in the act of being flayed alive—the skin hangs down loose like a garment behind him. Two pulpits in the choir much pleased us. They are of fine bronze, each running round an immense pillar, like a gallery; one is supported with admirable figures of Cyprian, Ambrose, Austin, and Jerome; and the other, by the four mysterious animals of Ezekiel. The tomb of Carlo Borromeo is most splendid. It is a room of silver gilt, and contains a superb altar, and the history, in bas-relief, of the chief events of his life—beyond conception magnificent. The shrine is of rock crystal. The summit of the tower of the cathedral presents a beautiful and extensive view of the city and plain of Milan; with its rivers, gardens, groves, vineyards, and numerous towns; bounded by the neighboring Alps, and more remote Apennines.

Still all is an entire flat; the *plain of fair Italy*. In this respect, Switzerland, dear Switzerland, far surpasses it. As we approached Milan, a small hedge in the road was sufficient to conceal the whole of the place from us. The town has some fine streets, with handsome foot-pavements; but as it is very ancient, most of the streets are narrow, and irregularly built. Its superb private edifices and palaces are but few; in these it yields, not only to Rome and Genoa, but to Florence. I observe all is done to keep out the heat: the shops have no windows; curtains hang on the outside of the doors; the people come out chiefly in the evening; and on great festivals they ascend the roof of their cathedral, and pass their evenings in the coolness which it furnishes. The streets have two single rows of flags, in the middle, for the wheels of the carriages, and sometimes double sets. The windows have three shutters: first, Venetian; then glass; then, on the inside, wood, to exclude the hot air.

*Sunday morning, Sept. 14.*—This is one of my melancholy Sundays. An immense Catholic town of one hundred and fifty thousand souls—the ecclesiastical apparatus enormous; about two hundred churches, eighty convents,\* and one hundred religious houses—compare this with the Protestant establishments of Birmingham or Manchester, which fall as far short of what such a crowded population fairly demands, as the Milan establishment exceeds it. We might surely learn something in England of the duty of greater zeal and attention to our pure form of Christianity, from the excessive diligence of the Catholics in their corrupt superstitions.

I feel a peculiar veneration for Milan on two accounts: St. Ambrose, whom Milner dwells on with such commendations, was the light of this city in the fourth century; Carlo Borromeo, whose benevolence exceeds all description, was archbishop here in the sixteenth. This last I know at present little of; but Ambrose was one of the most humble and spiritual of the fathers of

\* Milan is about ten miles in circumference; Naples fifteen, besides seven large suburbs, and contains 450,000 inhabitants; Rome is thirteen miles, within the circuit of its walls.

† Milan and Venice are placed on a par with each other.

\* One hundred and fourteen convents are said to have been suppressed by Napoleon.



the church, two or three centuries before Popery, properly speaking, began. In this city Ambrose preached; it was here Austin heard him, attracted by the fame of his eloquence. It was here also, that Angilbertus, bishop of Milan in the ninth century, refused to own the supremacy of the Pope; indeed, the church of Milan did not submit to the Roman see till two hundred years afterwards. May God raise up another Ambrose to purify and recall the city and churches, which he instructed thirteen or fourteen centuries ago! Nothing is impossible with God; but Popery seems to infatuate this people. On the church of Milan notices are affixed, that whoever causes a mass to be said there, may deliver any one he chooses from purgatory. In the mean time, this debasing superstition goes hand in hand with secret infidelity and unblushing vice.

But once more adieu. May God make me prize more the essence of Christianity, and dwell less on those adventitious circumstances which are so soon carried to excess, or converted to superstition! The Gospel in its simplicity, power, holiness, and love, is all in all. Here we cannot be too earnest, too fervent, too watchful. Other things are valuable as they promote this, and only as they do so. If they obscure or supersede what they ought to aid and adorn, they become pernicious and even destructive.

I am yours,

D. W.

#### NOTICE OF ST. AMBROSE.

Ambrose was one of the brightest luminaries of the fourth century. He was born in the year 338, and was educated for the law. The emperor Valentinian appointed him judge at Milan, A. D. 374, where he became renowned for prudence and justice, during five years. At the end of that time, a tumult having arisen in the cathedral at the election of a bishop, Ambrose repaired thither in order to quell it. An infant's voice was on a sudden heard in the crowd, "Ambrose is bishop." The whole assembly caught the words; and, forgetting he was a layman, vociferated with one consent, "Ambrose is bishop." The judge was confounded and alarmed, and absolutely refused to accept of the nomination. The emperor, however, whose court was at Milan, at length compelled him to assent.

His first act was to make over all his property to the church. He then commenced a particular and most devout study of the Scriptures. His labors afterwards, as bishop, were incessant. In the instruction of catechumens he employed so much pains, that five bishops could scarcely do what he alone performed. He preached every Lord's day, and frequently in the week. When he was fiercely persecuted by Justina the empress, a patroness of Arianism, and was required to yield up his church, he spent whole days and nights in the sacred place, employing the people in singing divine hymns and psalms; and on this occasion he introduced, for the first time, the responsive singing, after the manner of the east, to preserve them from weariness. Arianism was, by his doctrine and his zeal, at length expelled from Italy. But

still many persons of distinction in the city remained Pagans, especially amongst the senators. The tradition, therefore, as to his cathedral, mentioned in my next letter, may be considered authentic.

His conduct towards the emperor Theodosius has deservedly raised his character in all succeeding ages. The emperor professed Christianity, and in the main is thought to have been a decidedly pious prince; but he was of a passionate temper, and the inhabitants of Thessalonica having, in a tumult, put to death one of his officers, he signed a warrant for military execution, though he had previously promised Ambrose to forgive them. In three hours seven thousand persons, without trial and without distinction, were massacred. The Bishop upon this refused to admit Theodosius into the church of Milan for more than eight months, and then only after doing public penance. Mr. Addison, who travelled in Italy in 1699 and 1700, says, he was shown the gate of a church that St. Ambrose shut against the emperor. No such entrance was pointed out to us, probably from the neglect of our guide; for the tradition itself of such pieces of local history is commonly indelible.

But it is as the instructor of his great convert, St. Augustine, or Austin, that I most cherish the memory of Ambrose. Austin was sunk in the depths of Manichæism, when about the year 384, and the 30th of his age, a requisition was made from Milan to the prefect of Rome, where he then resided, to send a professor of rhetoric to that city. Austin obtained this honorable appointment. He sought the acquaintance of Ambrose because he was skilful in rhetoric. Ambrose received him like a father, and Austin conceived an affection for him, not as a teacher of truth, which he had no idea of discovering in the Christian church, but as a man kind to him; and he studiously attended his lectures, only with a curious desire of discovering whether fame had done justice to his eloquence or not. He stood, indifferent and fastidious with respect to this matter, and, at the same time, delighted with the sweetness of his language. But the ideas which he neglected came into his mind, together with the words with which he was pleased; and he gradually was brought to attend to the doctrines of the bishop. Thus imperceptibly did the grace of God work in the mind of this extraordinary man! It was long before he unbosomed himself to his instructor. He tells us it was out of his power to consult him as he could wish, surrounded as he was with crowds of persons whose necessities he relieved. During the little time in which he was from them, (and the time was but little,) he either refreshed his body with food or his mind with reading.

After two or three years of inward conflict, he at length gave in his name for baptism; which Ambrose administered to him, little thinking that he was admitting into the church a convert who, in the gracious purposes of God, was designed to be the bright glory of the western church, and the main restorer of decayed Christianity in the world. There was a little chapel lately rebuilt when Mr. Addison visited Milan, on one of the walls of which an inscription stated, that it was in that place that Austin was baptized, and that on this occasion St. Ambrose first sung his *Te Deum*, his

great convert answering him verse by verse. I lost the sight of this curiosity also; whether from the ignorance of my guide or not, I cannot say.

St. Ambrose died in the year 397, in the 57th year of his age, and the 23d of his episcopate. He has been charged with leaning too much towards the incipient superstitions of his day, and thus unconsciously of helping forward the growth of monastic bondage and prelatical pride. Something of this charge may be true; but he lived and died firm and unbending in all the fundamentals of divine truth. He loved the Saviour. He depended on his merits only for justification. He relied on the illumination and grace of the Holy Spirit. He delighted in communion with God. A rich unction of godliness rests on his writings; and he was one of the most fervent, humble, laborious, and charitable of all Christian bishops.

I know not whether I am too ardent in my feelings; but I must confess, that Zurich, Basle, Geneva, Milan, and Lyon, are the spots most dear to my recollection amongst all the places crowded with beauties of another kind, which have attracted my notice during my tour.

I need scarcely add, that in forming my judgment of St. Ambrose, my guide has been Milner, whose incomparable Ecclesiastical History, widely as it is circulated, is not nearly so well known as it deserves. For evangelical purity, accurate discrimination of character, laborious research, sound judgment, decision, fidelity, I know no book like it in the compass of English theology. As an ecclesiastical history it stands not merely unrivalled, but ALONE.

#### LETTER XIV.

*Milan, Sept. 13.—Chamberry, Sept. 19, 1823.*

Sunday at Milan—Sunday Schools—Punch—Virgin Mary—Noisy Festival—Popery like Paganism—Church of St. Ambrose—Library—Amphitheatre of Bonaparte—Unfinished Triumphal Arch—Remains of Roman Baths—Mint—Po-Tesin—Turin—Churches—Palace—Ambroggio—Lans-le-bourg—Ancient Arch at Susa—Mount Cenis Road—Reflections—St. Michael—Aiguebelle—Chamberry—Life of Borromeo—Extracts from Writings.

*MILAN, Sunday evening, Sept. 14, 1823.*

MY DEAREST SISTER—I have witnessed to-day, with grief and indignation, all the superstitions of Popery in their full triumph. In other towns, the neighborhood of Protestantism has been some check on the display of idolatry; but here in Italy, where a Protestant is scarcely tolerated, except in the chapels of ambassadors, you see what things tend to; Popery has its unimpeded course; every thing follows the guidance and authority of the prevailing taste in religion.

At half-past ten this morning we went to the cathedral, where seats were obtained for us in the gallery near the altar. We saw the whole of the proceedings at High Mass—priests almost without end—incense—singing—music—processions—perpetual changes of dress—four persons with mitres, whom the people called the little bishops—a

crowd of people coming in and going out, and staring around them; but not one prayer, nor one verse of the Holy Scriptures intelligible to the people, not even if they knew Latin; nor one word of a sermon; in short, it was nothing more nor less than a PAGAN SHOW.

We returned to our inn, and, after our English service, we went to see the catechising. This was founded by Borromeo, in the sixteenth century, and is one of the peculiarities of the diocese of Milan. The children meet in classes of ten or twenty, drawn up between the pillars of the vast cathedral, and separated from each other by curtains; the boys on one side, the girls on the other. In all the churches of the city there are classes also. Many grown people were mingled with the children. A priest, and sometimes a layman, sat in the midst of each class, and seemed to be explaining familiarly the Christian religion. The sight was quite interesting. Tables for learning to write were placed in different recesses. The children were exceedingly attentive. At the door of each school, the words, *pax vobis*, peace be unto you, were inscribed on a board; the names of the scholars were also on boards. Each school had a small pulpit, with a green cloth in front, bearing the Borromean motto, *Humilitas*.

Now what can, in itself, be more excellent than all this? But mark the corruption of Popery: these poor children are all made members of a fraternity, and purchase indulgences for their sins by coming to school. A brief of the Pope, dated 1609, affords a perpetual indulgence to the children in a sort of running lease of six thousand years, eight thousand years, &c., and these indulgences are applicable to the recovering of souls out of purgatory; the prayers also before school are full of error and idolatry. All this I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears; for I was curious to understand the bearings of these celebrated schools. Thus is the infant mind fettered and imprisoned.

Still I do not doubt that much good may be done on the whole—the Catholic catechisms contain the foundation of the Christian religion, a general view of Scripture history, explanations of the creation and redemption of mankind, some good instructions on the moral law, sound statements on the divinity of Christ, and the Holy Trinity; some acknowledgments of the fall of man, and the necessity of the grace of God's Holy Spirit; with inculcations of repentance, contrition, humility, self-denial, watchfulness, and preparation for death and judgment. These catechisms are not brief summaries, but rather full explanations of religion; making up small volumes of fifty or more pages. In the frontispiece of the catechism for the diocese of Geneva is the following affecting sentence, under the figure of our Lord, "Son amour et mon crime ont mis Jésus à mort"—a sentiment which cannot but produce good. Still all is wofully mixed up with superstition, and error, and human traditions; and the consequence of this mixture is, that vital truths are so associated in the mind, from early youth, with the follies of Popery, that even the most pious men of that communion do not enough distinguish between them. If you deny transubstantiation, they suppose you disbelieve the divinity of Christ; if you avow that



you are not a Papist, they suppose that you are a heretic, and have renounced the faith, &c. It was thus that such eminent Christians as Pascal, Nicole, Quesnel, Fénelon, and the great men of the Jansenist school, lived and died in the church of Rome. "A voluntary humility," as well as the "worshipping of angels,"—Coloss. ii. 18—may well be noted by St. Paul as an error, which ought zealously to be excluded from the Christian church.

After dinner, at half-past three, we had our second English service, at our hotel, and then were hurried out to see, what you will think incredible in a Christian country, altars set up in the open air to the Virgin Mary, with hangings, festoons of lamps, priests offering prayers, lamps hung on cords stretched across the streets, the houses and squares gaily adorned with carpets and lights; the churches open and illuminated, and crowds passing in and out; while priests were giving relics to kiss to the devotees who came kneeling at the altar in the most rapid succession; and soldiers were parading about to keep in order the assembled mobs. I never was so astonished in all my life. Religion was, in fact, turned into an OPEN NOISY AMUSEMENT. Before the cathedral itself, there was an amazing crowd to witness *Punch and his wife*—literally, Punch and his wife;\* priests were mingled in the crowd; and the thing is so much a matter of course, that nearly every picture of this cathedral, has, I understand, Punch and his auditory in the fore-ground; thus the farce is kept up throughout this sacred day.

And what is all this, but the ceremonies of ancient Roman Heathenism colored over with modern Roman Christianity? The resemblance between Popery and Paganism in Italy strikes every impartial observer. The names of things only are changed. There are the same prostrations—the same incense—the same holy water—the same lamps and candles—the same votive offerings and tablets—the same temples, with the names of the heathen deities slightly altered to suit the names of pretended saints—the same adoration of images—the same worship of the supposed guardians of roads and highways—the same pomps and processions—the same flagellations at certain periods—the same pretended miracles. It is not a little curious, that the very superstitions which the early Christian fathers most vehemently condemned in the Pagan rites, are now celebrated at Rome, in open day, as a part of Christian worship. As to the fact of the similarity of the heathen and Popish ceremonies, it is admitted on all hands. The Italian antiquaries delight in tracing, in all simplicity, the resemblance; whilst the theologians defend it on the ground of the necessity, in the conversion of the gentiles, of dissembling and winking at many things, and yielding to the times. And if at last they are pressed with the notorious idolatry and folly of many of these usages, they explain them away, precisely as the heathen did their worship of false deities; and thus establish the connection

and identity of the superstitions. Such is Dr. Middleton's testimony, in his most interesting, elegant, learned, and decisive "Letter from Rome," in the year 1729\*—a testimony confirmed by all impartial writers since.†

A late traveller, for instance,‡ says, there is the same strange mixture of the ceremonies of Paganism with the rites of the Roman Catholic religion in Sicily. The feast *de la Vara*, at Messina, is obviously founded on that of the Panathenæum celebrated at Athens, in all the abundant details of folly and impiety. The festivals of Saturn and Rhea are also continued there, under names slightly changed; and more than one ancient Pagan deity, is now a Christian saint. The Sicilians show you the mountain of *Saint Venus*, the well of *Saint Juno*, the chapel of *Saint Mercury*!||

The facility with which the Jesuit Missionaries in Japan and China allowed their converts to retain the rites and usages of Paganism, is well known, and is entirely consistent with the above statements. The Spanish Missionaries in America acted the same part. Popery conceals and corrupts Christianity; and then alloys it further with the peculiar habits and superstitions of each country.¶

But to pass to another subject. What a lamentable reflection is it, that all this is in a Christian country, and under color of Christianity, and even on the Christian Sabbath. The fact is, the Sabbath is almost unknown here as the day of sanctification and holy rest! Doubtless, in so vast a population, there are many secret disciples of the Lord Christ, who "sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof;" but as to the mass of the people, the Sunday is forgotten, obliterated, lost—nay, it is turned into the very worst day of all the week—no idea enters their minds of the divine purpose and mercy in it, of which the Lord himself speaks by his prophet, "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that SANCTIFY them." I should conceive there are but very, very few Bibles amongst all this population of one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

What do we owe to Luther, Calvin, Zuingle, Cranmer, Ridley, Knox, &c. who, under God, lived

\* There may possibly be, in Dr. Middleton's Letter, some attacks on the Popish miracles in that general spirit of incredulity and levity which seems to condemn all miracles—and against which a young reader cannot be too much on his guard.

† See Rome in the 19th century, above referred to. ‡ M. Forbin.

|| See "Extract from *Les Souvenirs de la Sicile*," *ut supra*.

¶ In a report made a year or two back on the state of religion in the south of India, we are informed that the Roman Catholics at Tinnevely, a large district under the Presidency of Madras, besides the idolatrous ceremonies which the church of Rome openly sanctions, "add such others as their heathenish inclinations and the customs of the country suggest. At all the great festivals of the church they conform to the customs of the Heathens; except that they call their 'Swamies' by names of Apostles and other saints, instead of Rama, Siva, &c. They draw the Rutt and carry their idols in procession, exactly like the Heathen. The distinction of Heathen castes is observed among them."

\* Italy is the native country of Punch. A priest at Naples once observing the crowd more attentive to Punch, than to himself who was preaching, suddenly seized a crucifix, and pointing to the figure of our Lord, exclaimed, "Ecco il vero Puncinello." He turned the admiration of the multitude instantaneously to himself.

and died to rescue us from similar darkness! And what an effusion of grace must have accompanied their labors, to give them the success with which they were crowned throughout the greater part of Europe. And how great must be the guilt of those Protestant countries, who are suffering the light of truth to go out in their churches, and are substituting false schemes of religion, or forms of cold orthodoxy, for the life-giving principles of the Reformation! May we "walk in the light" whilst it remains with us, lest "darkness" should again, in just judgment, be allowed to "come upon us!"

*Monday evening, eight o'clock, Sept. 15, 1823.*

—We hired a voiture this morning, and drove about this great city from eight o'clock till six, except taking an hour for refreshment. We have been richly rewarded. I shall say little of the churches. This place is the toyshop of the Virgin Mary: we observe every where tradesmen for selling wax candles, images, crucifixes, ornaments—this speaks for itself—"Demetrius and his craftsmen." I will only mention, that I observed a direct claim of miraculous powers on the tomb of a Dominican rector (*miraculorum gloriâ clarus.*) Plenary indulgences also were stuck up on almost every church. Two inscriptions, however, under the cross of our Lord, pleased me: "Having made peace by the blood of his cross;" and, "For the joy that was set before him, he despised the shame." If some of these old inscriptions were but acted upon, a mighty change would soon take place.

The church that delighted me most was that of St. Ambrose, anciently the cathedral, and where he ordinarily officiated, founded in the fourth century, on the site of a temple of Bacchus. Some remains of the conquered heathen temple were seen in different stones about the building, especially a bas-relief of Bacchanals, a pillar, with serpents, emblematic of Esculapius; and the chair of St. Ambrose, formerly used in the idol temple. The church is very old, and built of brick, and is almost buried by the elevation of the ground all around it. You descend several steps to the large court, surrounded with galleries in front of it, and then several more steps in entering the church itself. The body of St. Ambrose is supposed to lie under the high altar. I confess I sat with reverence in the chair of this great luminary of the church, and mused on the fatal tendency to corruption in man, which in a few centuries could engraft on St. Ambrose's doctrines, idolatries and superstitions almost as gross as those which he overthrew.

The Ambrosian Library, called after the name of Ambrose, was founded by Fred. Borromeo, cousin to the famous Borromeo; it contains thirty thousand volumes. We were shown fifty-eight leaves of a most curious MS. of the Iliad of the fifth century before Christ, of which Angelo Mai published a fac simile in 1810; a manuscript Virgil, with marginal notes by Petrarch; a Latin translation of Josephus, written on papyrus, of the third century; and a very valuable volume of designs by Leonardi da Vinci.

I know you will ask, what memorials of Bonaparte I visited. In reply I have to say, that we went to see his amphitheatre, with which I was much delighted. It is one thousand feet long, five

hundred broad, and capable of holding forty thousand persons; a truly Roman work. It is as spacious, though less elevated than the celebrated amphitheatre of Verona. The seats are made of turf, and rise one above another on the sloping bank. There are ten rows of them. They are of course all open to the heavens. The amusements are foot and horse races, and naval fights; the arena being easily filled with water, by means of sluices. We much admired the chariots made after the ancient Roman models, and used in the games. There is a suitable gallery on one side for distinguished personages; and the whole is surrounded with a wall. We next proceeded to Bonaparte's villa, which is beautiful; and his gate of Marengo also, except that by a great mistake he dedicated it to "Peace the preserver of nations."

But the most splendid and affecting monument of his fame, is the incomplete triumphal arch at the entrance of the Sempion road. The unfinished stones remain where they were at his death. The bas-reliefs, which were to record his triumphs, are covered with dust. The sheds for the workmen are deserted. You walk amidst the half-formed designs. No one cares to finish the plan; and a total obliteration seems to have effaced the gaudy fascination which once attended his name. In the breasts of the people, however, here as elsewhere, he still lives, and comparisons not the most flattering are made between him and the Austrian government.

After this we went to inspect some very curious Roman antiquities; a noble range of sixteen lofty pillars, formerly belonging to the baths of Milan. They are fine Corinthian fluted pillars of white marble of Paros, of admirable proportion, and placed at the most just distances from each other. They are near the church of St. Lorenzo, and are thought to have been erected at a time when the purest architectural taste prevailed. The royal palace, and that of the archbishop, had nothing in them very remarkable. At the mint we saw a balance which turned with the eight hundredth part of a grain. The practice all over Bonaparte's kingdoms of marking the value of each coin on the face of it, seems to be very good. A franc is marked a franc, five francs, five francs, and so on. The hospitals and charitable institutions, amounting to about thirty, we could not visit.

Many of the women here wear at the back of the head a semi-circle of broad cut pieces of tin, something like a fan, with two transverse pieces at the bottom of them towards the neck, like two pewter spoons joined by the handles—a costume purely Roman. The general dress of the women is very becoming, with black or white veils; if they have not veils, they draw the shawl over the head. One of the most peculiar customs at Milan is the hanging of the window-curtains, of all sorts of colors, not within the house, but on the outside. It is singular also, to observe the dirty blacksmith, or awkward shoe-boy, eating immense bunches of ripe black grapes, which would sell in England for three shillings, or three shillings and six-pence a pound, as he goes along the streets. —But I must quit Milan, which though it has distressed, has delighted and instructed us, and has more than amply repaid us the journey.



*Turin, capital of the principality of Piedmont, 18 miles from Milan, 2047 from London by our route, Tuesday evening.*—We left Milan this morning at a quarter past five, and in fourteen hours and a half reached this splendid and far-famed city. We left our friend and fellow-traveller, who had accompanied us from England, to go on to Rome for the winter. The two dear boys and I took the carriage which met us at Martigny last Tuesday from Lausanne, and posted hither. We had three horses and no luggage (every thing is at Lausanne;) so that we have made a most excellent day's journey. The plain of Piedmont is of course level; it is also extremely ill cultivated, and so marshy, from the numerous streams falling into the Tesin or the Po, and perpetually overflowing the country, that we hardly saw a vine the whole hundred miles. The villages and towns bear sad marks of that want of energy and spirit connected with the prostrate tendency of despotic governments. Switzerland far, far exceeds what we have yet seen of Piedmont, in all respects, except that indescribable soft balmy air, which soothes the whole frame. The hedges are often of acacia. The grapes and peaches are spread in immense baskets for sale in every little village. We gave three-halfpence for a pound of delicious black grapes, and half a franc, fourpence halfpenny, for a bottle of light wine—for we did not stop to eat. The people here are of a pure olive color. The priests jostle you almost at every corner. The chief corn in this country, and in Lombardy also, is Indian wheat and some rice.

*Turin, Wednesday morning, half-past eight.*—My boys have taken eleven hours' sleep to balance accounts. This city, of eighty-five thousand souls, is beautifully situated on the northern bank of the Po, which, rising at mount Viso, crosses northern Italy, and after bathing the walls of fifty cities, and receiving thirty rivers, in a course of three hundred miles, empties itself into the Adriatic sea. It is the king of Italian floods. Indeed the Po, and the Tesin, are the only two rivers famed in song, which are on our route. The Tesin or Ticino, we have crossed more than once; it springs from Mount St. Bernard, traverses the Lago Maggiore, runs by Pavia, and then discharges itself into the Po.

*Ambioggio, twenty-one miles from Turin, on the road to Lyon, half-past eight, Wednesday evening.*—We are now actually on our way to England, and every step will advance us nearer home. Thanks be to God for preservation and every needful mercy hitherto, during a long journey. May we be brought again to my dear Ann; and with her and our little girl arrive safely in London! I must now give you some account of our drive this morning about Turin. We set off at half-past nine in a voiture. In six hours we had visited many of the chief curiosities. What shall I say to you about this famous city, formerly the gayest of Italy? It is a royal residence of the king of Sardinia, the streets of which are built all in straight lines, or *radii*, which meet in a centre. There are one hundred and forty-five. It is about four miles in circuit. The fortifications were demolished after the battle of Marengo. The houses are uniform, and many of the streets

have arcades on each side. A rivulet of clear water flows down the middle of each street. The street of the Po is one of the finest in Europe. There is an uniformity in all this; but the arcades are so noble, and the city so well built, that the appearance is imposing. It far surpasses Bern, which, I suppose, must have been built in imitation of it. The character of the inhabitants is like their dialect, Italian with a mixture of French. Their dress is little different from that of the French. Their manners are polished, from the long residence of the court. The English used formerly to remain for some time here, before they prosecuted their Italian tour; in order to perfect themselves in the language and habits of the country. Since the revolution they more commonly rest for this purpose at Geneva. They are thus kept from the snares and seductions of a luxurious court, and the associations, of a dissolute Italian population.

As to churches, there are one hundred and ten, with about five thousand priests, monks, &c. Almost all the churches we visited were filled with people, and two priests officiating at separate altars. At the Jesuits' church, I inquired if there were any of that order now at Turin; the guide replied, yes; that they were beginning again, and were arranging their affairs! Thus the zeal and activity of the Roman Catholic church still remain unabated. In some things it deserves to be imitated by Protestant countries. Its ample provision of churches and ecclesiastical ministers—its watchfulness over the people within its jurisdiction—its care in visiting the sick—its diligence in catechising, &c. are examples to the reformed communities. A pure and spiritual religion ought to be the motive to similar, and even greater exertions; only abating every thing approaching to intolerance and dominion over the conscience. For in the church of Rome, what is good in itself, is so corrupted, as to leave a melancholy impression on the mind. Still, with regard to churches, is it not painful to reflect that in Catholic countries accommodation is provided for the entire population; whilst in many parts of England, one in ten—twelve—fifteen, is all that the churches will contain. Thank God this disproportion is now by degrees lessening!

At the church of St. Mary of the Consolation, we were solemnly assured of the miracles which the Virgin had wrought. The walls indeed were covered with the votive offerings of those who imagined they had received miraculous benefits. But this was not more extraordinary than the chapel of the Holy Napkin, in the cathedral; in which chapel is preserved the very napkin in which our Saviour was enfolded after his crucifixion, with the marks of his sacred blood! The servant who told me this, did it not only with gravity, but with an awe in his voice and manner quite unique. He assured me that the Pope had seen it in passing through the city—this was an irresistible proof!

What would the noble Claudius, bishop of Turin in the ninth century, have said to these superstitions? You remember, perhaps, the name. He may be called, truly, the first Reformer from Popery. From the year 817 to 839 he continued to protest against the errors of the see of Rome,

and kept them from being introduced into his diocese, in spite of the violent opposition which was raised against him. In the remains of his writings which are extant, he declares Jesus Christ to be the only Head of the Church—he condemns the doctrine of human merits, and the placing traditions on the same level with the Scriptures—he maintains that we are saved by faith only—he holds the fallibility of the church—exposes the futility of praying for the dead, and the sinfulness of the idolatrous practices then supported by the Roman see. The valleys of Piedmont, inhabited now by the Waldenses, or Vaudois, of whom I hope to tell you something more particularly, were in his diocese; and it is probable those churches were much increased and confirmed by his labors.\*

But to return to Turin. At the university we saw many undoubted antiquities of Roman fame—busts of Cicero—altars—household gods—tripods, and a head-dress like what I described as now worn at Milan,—all exceedingly curious. The university contains two thousand five hundred students. There are one hundred and twenty thousand volumes in the library. I asked if they had any manuscripts of the Scriptures; the librarian stared, and then showed me a Latin Bible of Thomas Aquinas! But at Vercelli they profess to have the autograph of St. Mark's Gospel—the sacred original of the evangelist—in Latin; mistaking, I suppose, the celebrated Codex Vercellensis of Eusebius for it; or else confounding Vercelli with Venice.†

The royal palace forms one side of an immense square, in the midst of which is a fortified tower, surrounded with a moat, erected by the duke of Savoy. I think it is the very largest square I have seen on the continent. I was pleased to see in the palace a portrait of our Charles I.; and, which is singular, of Calvin. The small library of the private chapel contained a Bible, Austin's Confessions and Letters, and Nicole's Essays; all excellent books. This leads one to hope, that the same judgment and piety which formed such a selection, might possibly govern the habits and conduct of some of the royal personages for whom it was made. It was the first time I had seen a Bible in a private Catholic library.

The arsenal had thirty thousand muskets of English manufacture. We observed in the Museum a stuffed wolf, taken two years ago near Turin, after having killed twelve or thirteen children. From the observatory we had a commanding view of the city and neighborhood. The churches generally are magnificent structures, in marble of every vein and color, with profuse or-

naments; indeed, the ornaments are too profusely scattered, and the city hardly contains one chaste model of architecture. Turin is, however, by far more elegant, finished, splendid, attractive, than the enormous mercantile city of Milan. We noticed that the tradesmen at Turin affix their names and trades not above their shop windows, but on pieces of embroidered cloth, extended between the doors of the adjoining houses.

We dined at half-past three, and at five came on two stages to this small town, because the rain had fallen all day, and we were afraid of snow on mount Cenis; indeed, the rain made it impossible to walk about Turin, and therefore we left it with less regret. We crossed, at Turin, the Po, in going to the queen's palace: perhaps no river has been more celebrated by the poets; but where we saw it, it scarcely answered my expectations. The bridge over it is a noble structure.

*Thursday, Sept. 18, Lans-le-bourg, at the foot of Mount Cenis, on the French side, five o'clock.*—We set off this morning from Ambioggio, at a quarter before six, and came in three hours to Susa, on the Italian side of mount Cenis. Here we beheld with admiration the triumphal arch, raised in honor of Augustus, by Cottius, king of the Cottian Alps. After eighteen centuries, it is in excellent preservation; the elegance, simplicity, and majesty of it, surpasses much the intended arch of Bonaparte. The inscription is become faint; but it records the names of the twelve nations who remained faithful to Augustus, when all the rest threw off the Roman yoke. It is curious, that the designs of those who are commemorated by these arches were similar: Augustus to subdue France, Bonaparte to subdue Italy; only in the first instance, Italy was the aggressor, and in the second, France. Bonaparte's plan was, like that of Augustus, to keep in subjection a conquered country, by making a road for his artillery directly across its natural fortifications, the Alps. The characteristics of military ambition are the same in every age.

The road which Bonaparte restored and improved over Mount Cenis was finished in 1811, six years after he had executed the astonishing work of the Simplon: next to that road, I suppose, it is the finest in the world. The day, however, has been so exceedingly rainy, that we could be no judges of the scenery around us. The road is in itself admirably good, and the ascent and descent most gradual. There are twenty-six houses of refuge, and a military hospice for two thousand men. The highest point of the Cenis is about nine thousand feet. We have been extremely cold, but without snow. We are now two thousand feet lower, and still need a fire.

We left Italy, properly so called, about two or three to-day, and came again into Savoy. From Domo d'Ossola to Mount Cenis, we have travelled in Italy about two hundred and twenty miles: we have had a specimen of Italian scenery, climate, manners, religion; we have visited the capitals of Lombardy and Piedmont. We have seen Popery in all its deepest traits of dominant superstition, just as we saw it at Bonn, Franckfort, and Bern, in its most restrained and modest form. The rapid visit has been new, instructive, and yet, most alarming. The general impression is me-

\* See Milner, Cent. IX.

† Jean Andre Irico published at Milan, in 1743, the book of the Gospels found among the MSS. of the church of Vercelli. It is supposed to be in the very hand-writing of Eusebius, of Vercelli, who lived in the fourth century, and was a friend of Athanasius. The MS. is deposited amongst the relics, which are preserved with superstitious reverence in the author's church at Vercelli. There is a pretended autograph of St. Mark's Gospel at Venice; but it is merely a copy of the Latin version.



lancholy. The lower orders are sunk into the grossest superstitions; the higher are deeply infected with infidelity. Both are the prey of extreme ignorance, vice, and superstition. Public spirit, morals, industry, commerce, religion, alike languish. The arts have declined. Even the temperature of Italy has become, in some parts, less healthy, from the vast undrained marshes and the indolent agriculture of the farmers. The French domination lessened some of these evils, whilst it healed none, and introduced other mischiefs of its own. A spirit of turbulence and political chicane has begun to agitate the Carbonari; but with no beneficial influence on morals and religion.

The Popish government is so feeble, that hordes of banditti infest the road from Rome to Naples, and venture to negotiate almost openly, for the ransom of their captives. In the meantime the ignorance, profligacy, and secret infidelity of the ecclesiastics increase, and are undermining the few scattered fragments of the Christian temple.

The Bible is almost unknown. A friend, who visited Rome a few years back, told me he met a Roman lady of distinction there who had never heard that there was a book revealed by Almighty God which we call the Bible; and who contended for a long time with him that he must be mistaken in supposing that there was: "For," added she, "I must in that case have heard of it." Another friend, a clergyman, who was in Italy in 1818, was asked by a person of education and respectability, at whose house he lodged, what could be meant by the expression, "God is a Spirit," which she found in a tract which he had given her. Upon his explaining this very first element of Scriptural religion, she expressed the utmost surprise, and asked him whether he was really serious in saying that Almighty God did not resemble the pictures and images of him which the church had taught her to believe all her life. The same friend told me, that in a large company when the subject of Christianity happened to be introduced, the most determined principles of infidelity were avowed by the leading persons assembled. At present, little can be hoped for.—You have not only to convince the infidel of the truth of Christianity, but you have first to free his mind from the intimate association of it with the corruptions of the church of Rome. His arguments against revelation are drawn very much from these corruptions; and he is neither disposed to allow your account of what Christianity is, to be the true one, nor to receive, on your authority, your arguments in its favor. He has no foundation of general knowledge on which you can proceed. Surely all these things concur in exciting the persuasion, that Popery can only be overthrown by the immediate power of that God whose grace it has been so long opposing and resisting. And indeed it is remarkable, that A SUDDEN UNEXPECTED OVERTHROW—at a moment least looked for—is the representation given us of its approaching downfall in the Sacred Writings.—Rev. xviii. 8. 10. 17.

All that I saw of Italy entirely confirms the accounts given me by my friends. Even as to political affairs, discontent seems lurking in the breasts of the people; especially in Lombardy and Pied-

mont. They regret Bonaparte; and they will scarcely speak to the Austrian soldiers, of whom there are about eight thousand at Milan alone. When I asked the waiter at Milan if there were any Protestants there, he replied, "We are all Protestants (persons who protest) now." But I indulge too much in these remarks.

At Turin, we had eight hundred and sixteen miles to travel to London by the road we propose taking, and we have reduced this to-day by eighty-four miles. The village where we now are, Lans-le-bourg, is at the foot of the French side of Mount Cenis, a miserable village of near two thousand souls. We were induced to stop here, because an English woman keeps the inn; she married a Savoyard nine years ago. She was a Protestant, but I observed her faith had been much shaken by the total want of a reformed worship. I said all I could to confirm her mind in the doctrine of Christ our Lord. Beggary and misery still prevail. Crowds of wretched deformed supplicants surround us. We gave a trifle just now to an old woman, aged one hundred and nine years. The people here speak French; so that I hope to be able to communicate a little more with the inhabitants on the subject of religion and morals.

The manner of posting here is, like every thing else, on a wretched footing. All is under the police; not a postillion nor a horse stirs without the police's leave; and when they do stir, such creatures—men and horses too—fit for ploughing, rather than for running in a carriage; and men and masters too often ready to cheat the English. Sometimes the postillion crams his legs, shoes and all, into his boots, which are like churns—sometimes he thrusts them in with neither shoes nor stockings. In Lombardy their livery was a light yellow cloth, with tassels! The tackling of the horses, being chiefly of cord, requires one or two regular stops, each stage, for the purpose of being adjusted.

And now, as I have fallen upon the customs of the people abroad, I may as well speak to you about the washing, or rather beating, of the linen on the continent. At Geneva, the apparatus was most complete. In the river a kind of covered shed was built, with small boards on the sides going down to the water's edge; at each board a woman was kneeling with a broad stick or platter, with which she was beating the clothes as she plunged them into the water—soap is almost unknown. The clothes are thus half-washed and half-torn, and then charged an enormous price. At Milan, and on the road to Turin, the men and women in company wash their own clothes in the small streams or puddles flowing through the towns.

*St. Michel, Friday morning, Sept. 19th, 10 o'clock.*—We are still on the Mount Cenis road, though we crossed yesterday the mountain called by that name. We set off this morning just after five, and have come thirty-six miles; the day is extremely cold, but we have no rain, and not much fog; we have been able, therefore, to enjoy the beauties of the country through which we have passed. We have seen nothing as yet which equals the Simplon scenery; but still, many parts of the road have been majestic. The character

is wild rocky Alps, with the torrent of the Arque flowing or rather rushing down at bottom.

*Aigue-belle, 72 miles from Lans-le-bourg, 4 o'clock, afternoon.*—The day has turned out most beautiful; we have been passing through the valley of Maurienne all the morning, and have thus made our way through the Alps, the centre chain of which we crossed at Mount Cenis. This Aigue-belle (Aqua bella) is the gate as it were of these vast natural fortresses, which have been surrounding us at the height of eight or nine thousand feet. The villages and people seem to be still wretched, with many, many goitres. There are one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants in this valley, who live by the produce of cattle; they plant no grain, but a little oats and barley. The torrent spreads desolation, and renders many parts of the valley a mere marsh. The king of Sardinia has just completed a military fortress, on the spot where Savoy is nearest Dauphiny. The road has been capital and on a gentle descent, and many of the points of view have been exquisitely beautiful.

*Chamberry, Friday night, Sept. 19th.*—We have arrived at this capital of Savoy, after a journey of ninety-nine miles in sixteen hours. The road, after Aigue-belle, became very indifferent, and the night coming on, we were not able to enjoy much of the fine country through which we passed. The proper Mount Cenis road extends from Susa to Aigue-belle, about one hundred and thirty-five miles, and is undoubtedly a stupendous work, though on the whole much inferior to the Simplon. Thus have we again to bless God for all his mercies! The two wet days have given my younger son a little cold, which I trust will soon pass off; in other respects, they have enhanced the value and enjoyment of the fine weather we have been this day witnessing. We hope to be at Lyon to-morrow, at Geneva on Wednesday, and at Lausanne the same evening, to rejoin my dear, dear family, from whom I seem to have been separated for an age.

I am your affectionate

D. W.

#### NOTICE OF CARDINAL BORROMEO.

I was vexed on returning to England, and consulting my books, that I had been so long ignorant of the history and character of Borromeo. He is considered by the Roman Catholic writers as the model of all virtues, and the great restorer of ecclesiastical discipline in the sixteenth century. I have not been able to satisfy myself in what degree he was a true Christian, in the Scriptural sense of the word. That he was devoted to the superstitions of Popery, and was a firm upholder of the Roman see, cannot be doubted; but I have no access to his sermons or letters, so as to judge whether any living embers of the faith and love of Christ were smothered at the bottom of these superstitions. His habits of devotion, his self-denial, his zeal, his fortitude, his humility, and especially his unbounded and almost unparalleled benevolence, which are ascribed to him by universal consent, would lead one to hope that, notwithstanding "the wood, and hay, and stubble," accumulated on it, he was building on the true "foundation, Christ Jesus."—1 Cor. iii. 11, 12.

He was born at Arona in 1538, in a small apartment which I saw behind the church; and was of one of the noblest and most opulent families of Italy. At the age of eleven he had several livings given him by his uncle the Cardinal de Medici, who was elected Pope in 1549. In his twenty-third year he was created cardinal by the same pontiff, and managed the proceedings of the council of Trent, as well as the chief temporal affairs of the Pope, for some years. This I consider as by far the most unfavorable part of Borromeo's life, as to the cultivation of personal piety. Such employments at Rome must have initiated him into all the system of that artful and secular court—and he who was intrusted to draw up the Trent catechism, must at that time have had little real Christian knowledge or feeling. However, in 1565 he left Rome, and went to reside at Milan, of which he had been made archbishop.

Here begins the bright part of Borromeo's history. He had now to preside over the largest diocese of Italy, consisting of not less than eight hundred and fifty parishes, many of them in the wildest regions of the Alps. He began by resigning all his other preferments, by giving up to his family his chief estates, and by dividing the revenues of his archbishopric into three parts—one for the poor—another for the building and reparation of churches—the third for his domestic expenditure as bishop; all the accounts of which he submitted annually to the examination of his clergy. He next totally renounced the splendor in which he had lived at Rome, reduced the number of his servants, forbade the use of silk garments in his palace, rendered his household a pattern of edification, slept himself on boards, prolonged his watchings and prayers to a late hour of the night, wore an under dress coarse and common, and devoted himself to perpetual fasts and abstinences.

He then entered on the task of restoring decayed discipline and order throughout his vast diocese. To this end he was indefatigable in visiting himself every parish under his care, held frequent ecclesiastical synods, and established a permanent council, which met monthly to inspect and regulate the conduct of the priests. In this manner his cotemporaries agree in asserting, that he removed various scandals which prevailed amongst all classes of the faithful, abolished many superstitious usages, and checked the ignorance and abuses of the secular and regular clergy.

His fortitude in carrying through his reforms, notwithstanding the violent opposition which he met with from all quarters, deserves remark. On one occasion an assassin was hired, who shot at him, whilst kneeling in prayer, in the archiepiscopal palace. Borromeo, unmoved, continued his devotions; and, when he rose from his knees, the bullet, which had been aimed at his back, but had been caught in the lawn sleeves of his dress, fell at his feet.

His charities were unbounded. He built ten colleges, five hospitals, and schools and public fountains without number. Besides this, he bestowed annually the sum of thirty thousand crowns on the poor; and in various cases of public distress in the course of his life, as much as two hundred thousand crowns more.

In the meantime, his personal virtues, his low-



liness, his self-command, his forgiveness of injuries, his temperance, his prudence, his sanctity, the consistency of his whole character, (I speak after his biographers, whose veracity, I believe, is not questioned,) gave him such weight, that he not only rendered his immense diocese a model of good order and discipline, after an anarchy of eighty years, during which its archbishops had not resided, but extended his influence over the neighboring dioceses, and pushed his regulations throughout a great part of France and Germany.

Perhaps his conduct during a pestilence which raged for six months at Milan is amongst the actions of his life which may lead one the most to hope that this benevolent and tender-hearted prelate was indeed animated with the fear and love of his Saviour. Nothing could restrain him from visiting his sick and dying flock, during the raging of this fatal malady: when his clergy entreated him to consult his own safety, he replied, that nothing more became a bishop than to face danger at the call of his duty. He was continually found in the most infected spots, administering consolation both to the bodies and souls of his perishing people; and he sold all the small remains of his ancient splendor, and even his bed, to give the produce to the distressed.

The institution, or rather invention of Sunday schools, is again a further evidence of something more than a superstitious state of heart. Nothing could be so novel as such institutions in the sixteenth century, and nothing so beneficial. When we recollect the public admiration which has rested on such schools in our own Protestant and enlightened country, though planned scarcely fifty years back, we may estimate the piety of mind, the vigor and penetration of judgment, which could lead a Catholic archbishop and cardinal to institute them two hundred years ago, and to place them on a footing which has continued to the present day. May I not add, that possibly some of the superstitious usages now attached to these schools may have grown up since the time of Borromeo. Certainly the indulgences which I saw were of the date of 1609, five-and-twenty years after his death; for the reader must be informed that, in the year 1584, this benevolent bishop fell a victim to fever caught in the mountainous parishes of his diocese, which he was visiting in his usual course.

As a preacher he was most laborious. Though he had an impediment in his speech, and a difficulty in finding words to express readily his meaning, he overcame these hindrances, and preached most assiduously on Sundays and festivals at Milan. His biographers say, that the higher classes in the city were offended with him, and did not frequent his sermons; but that the common people flocked with eagerness to hear him. Perhaps something of what the Apostle calls "the offence of the cross," may be traced in this. It does not at all lessen my hope of Borromeo's piety, that the rich and great did not follow him.

Such is a faint sketch of some of the chief events in the life of Charles Borromeo. My materials are scanty, especially as to the spiritual state of his heart and affections. It is for God only to judge on this subject: but charity rejoices to hope all things in such a case. I acknowledge

that his simple and sublime motto, *HUMILITAS*, is very affecting to my mind. I trust it was the expression of his real character; and that his submission to the usurpations of the Romish church may have arisen from that faulty prostration of the understanding to human authority, which is so apt to engraft itself, under circumstances like those of Borromeo, on scriptural lowliness of spirit. Oh, if he had more fully studied and obeyed his Bible, and had read with honest candor the treatises of his great contemporaries, the reformers of Germany and Switzerland, he might, perhaps, have become the LUTHER or ZUINGLE, instead of, what he actually was, only the FENELON of Italy.

Since the publication of the second edition of these letters, I have had an opportunity of consulting, at the Bodleian library, some of the smaller works of Borromeo; from which I proceed to make some extracts.

I. The following are taken from a collection of his letters, published at Antwerp, in 1623. I give only those parts which may serve to express his sentiments on the weightier matters of religion.

Speaking of the death of Bernardus Vimercatus, of the College of Milan, Borromeo thus expresses himself: "*We all die, and are as water spilled on the ground.* But as this does not depend on us, but arises from the necessity of nature, wise men are distinguished from the foolish by this, that the foolish bestow this most brief life in obtaining eternal death; the wise in securing everlasting life. We all, indeed, die without difference; but to some death is the way to life and glory, never to end; to others, to darkness and eternal death. I trust you will be strongly excited, by the death of your brother, to a contempt of this life and a salutary despising of earthly things. I hope you will each of you argue thus: '*Vimercatus is dead in the flower of his age, in strong health, with the prospect of a longer life than others; I also must die: and in that so unknown and so uncertain hour, what kind of life should I wish I had followed? What should I wish I had done for the glory of God and for the safety of my soul? I am grieved and ashamed of my present sloth, in a matter so infinitely important. If the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not suffered his house to be digged through.* Death impends day and night, and lays wait for my life. Shall I not at length awake? Shall I not take care of my soul, and of my salvation?'

"Whoever of you is excited by these thoughts, (and I hope all of you may be so,) will, I trust, in future, employ the greatest diligence in *walking worthy of God*, and in seeking most eagerly after the perfection necessary to an ecclesiastical person."

To archbishop Valentia, Patriarch of Antioch. he writes, "According to the zeal for the divine glory which God, the Father and Giver of all good, has imparted to me, I love with much affection all his servants, but more especially those who are in the dignity and watch, as it were, of bishops, and who labor that the most precious blood

of Christ may not seem to have been shed in vain for his sheep; and who, as heavenly orbs, both illuminate the sheep with the light of evangelical doctrine, and excite them to all parts of Christian excellence by the force of good example."

To the doctor Dumnus he says, "By doing this, you will please the Lord Jesus, and this is the chief argument of all; to whom I earnestly pray that he will defend you, and fill you with all heavenly treasures."

Of Bishop Alba he expresses a hope, that in dying "he had flown away from the body of this death, to enjoy those blessings which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive."

He writes to Ernestus, archbishop of Cologne, on his being raised to that see: "And, although I dare not congratulate you on this great dignity, (for some experience hath taught me how much business and care, and how much labor and danger there is in the office of a bishop,) yet I congratulate the inhabitants of Cologne and all Germany, which I hope will be much assisted by your administration of that church and your restoration of ancient discipline, in the love of the Catholic faith, and also in spirit and in truth. Every thing depends, believe me, on your showing yourself to be a bishop who is blameless, as the apostle Paul teaches. This you will easily accomplish, the grace of God assisting you, if you regard nothing whatever but the glory of God, and make both the Catholics and heretics understand this. And what can be considered of such value, in any view, as the welfare of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ! We ought to condemn every thing, and to give up life itself, for the salvation of one soul; what then is to be done, or rather what is not to be done, where the salvation of almost unnumbered souls is concerned?"

To the cardinal Valdemontanus he speaks thus: "Piety rests not on any slight foundation, which distance of place may weaken, or length of time destroy; but depends on God, whose nature is eternal and whose power is infinite, and is preserved by his favor. I hear that you not only burn with the love of this piety, but also labor to inflame with it all around you. And nothing ought to be more interesting to any of us than this. For this is to be a sweet savor of Christ; this is to give light to all that are in the evangelical house, which all the servants of Christ are bound to do; but those more especially who are illustrious by their dignity, as lamps well filled with oil and burning in splendid candlesticks."

To the bishop of Trent he speaks thus: "In your commendation of my conduct, I see that your design is to excite me to perform hereafter the duties of a pastor with more diligence. For daily, or rather hourly, I more clearly perceive how far I am from that perfection of duty, which both God requires of me, and the dignity in which I am placed demands. Wherefore, I again and again beseech you not to cease supplicating the divine Majesty for me."

The following is his language to Ascanius Columna, abbot of St. Sophia: "The more I see in you the gifts of God, the more ardently do I desire that you would contend with all your powers of body and mind to glorify God's name, and bend

all your schemes to this one point, to be a sweet savor of Christ. Never imagine that there can be any thing more excellent and more valuable, in every respect, than to diffuse into the minds of those around you the most sweet and delightful savor of Christ, by your well-ordered life and exemplary Christian virtues; and to allure them by a heavenly and divine pleasure, and bring them over from the blandishments of this life, and the seductions of earthly things, to the pursuit of eternity, and a supreme love and delight in God.— This ought to be the end proposed in all our studies, and even all our thoughts. If we aim at any thing else, we are vanity itself."

The last extract from these letters is to the cardinal à Joiosa: "I am not ignorant that great difficulties impede and hinder most things; but nothing is difficult, nothing is arduous to love. Love is strong as death. And many things are more difficult in the opinion of men, than they are found to be in fact. But what is arduous or difficult to a good pastor, who by his example sets straight what is crooked, softens what is rough, fills up valleys, and levels mountains? The force of example is great; especially in that man who is adorned with family, age, riches, connections, dignity; and who esteems all these things only so far as they serve to set forth the glory of God."

II. After these various citations from his letters, I go on to the following, from the instructions which the archbishop published for the direction of his clergy, in preaching the Gospel.

"I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the quick and the dead, preach the word," saith the most holy Saint Paul." It is in this solemn manner that Borromeo begins the book.

On the subject of the dignity of the sacred ministry, he exhorts the preacher to consider, "1st. That it entirely regards the glory of Almighty God, and the salvation of souls. 2d. That by it the word of God is conveyed from the very fountain of the divine Spirit, to the souls of the faithful; in order to water them with heavenly blessings. 3d. That it treats of subjects the most sacred and awful in themselves. 4th. That it was exercised, not only by the most holy men, not only by apostles, but by the Son of God himself."

He afterwards urges him to meditate on "the difficulty of speaking suitably and with judgment on such subjects, that he may fly with more ardent desires to God, who can supply him with all needful help by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit."

He then teaches him that "a preacher should especially pray to God, that by his divine help he may not be lifted up with the pursuit of his own praise and glory; not even with the thought of it; but may take no account of it whatever."

He then says, "Let the preacher fly as a pest all ambition and all suspicion of it. Let him not aim at, or desire, a more distinguished place for preaching in; but remember that Jesus Christ the Lord, who was sent down from heaven to teach mankind, preached in villages, and houses, and fields."

He next gives directions for his conduct: "The preacher should do every thing constantly and boldly for the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls. He should be inflamed with the love of



God; and not only patiently bear reproaches, threats, and contumely; but endure, if need be, death itself. He should offer and commend himself, as it were, to the divine illumination; and, shutting up his senses, acquiesce and be content with the infinite love and immense charity of the light of God.”\*

As to the preparation of his sermons, “the preacher will understand that his office doth not rest on human learning or eloquence, but on a divine power and the grace of the Holy Ghost; and he will take most diligent care that he does not grieve the Holy Spirit by touching the work of apostles and of the Lord Jesus himself, when infected with any mortal sin. But he will purify his conscience from all sin by the sacrament of penitence, before he begins to read the word of God. And he will consider, that he has much to fear that most solemn threat of the prophet, *But unto the wicked, saith God, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?*”

“Before he begins to study his discourse, he will make a solemn prayer to God. He will then first understand the subject on which he is about to preach; and then meditate upon it, and strive so to affect himself with it, that he may excite the minds of his hearers to the same pious affections.

“Before he ascends the pulpit, let him suppose that he has before him a company of hungry men waiting for food from his preaching; or a company of lame, paralytic, dropsical, dumb, and blind persons, seeking for cure from him. Considering this, let him so manage every part of his discourse as to suit their cases, and advance their welfare and cure, by advice, counsel, and all sorts of remedies.

“Or let him consider himself as a fisher of men, and remember that he ought to strain every nerve so to fish that he may fill the evangelical net, as it were, with perishing souls, and gain them to Christ the Lord.

“After preaching, he should spend some time in prayer, before he takes any refreshment.

“As to the times and places of preaching, he should preach every where, and at all times; but especially every Sunday and holy-day; and daily during advent and lent.”

III. I might finish by giving some extracts from the “constitutions and decrees made by the provincial synod of Milan under the authority of Borromeo,” and published at Venice in 1566; but I abstain; I will only notice that it orders every bishop to preach continually, unless hindered by illness; and to make himself acquainted with the state of each parish in his diocese; it directs that schools for educating the clergy should be formed, and a tenth part of all benefices be devoted for that purpose; and that those destined for the church, should read the Bible diligently.

These extracts from the various writings of Borromeo are, to my mind, I confess, charming.

\* The allusion perhaps is to 1 John, i. 5. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;” or, Psalm xxxvi. 9. “With Thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light.”

They place him in a new light. Instead of the dazzling glare of panegyric as to his outward history, they exhibit him in the soft lustre of the Christian, the pastor, the bishop, as to the interior of his heart. They open to us the fountain of grace and piety, from which his extraordinary benevolence, diligence, and humility flowed. They form another proof, if any were wanting, that the peculiar motives of the Gospel of Christ are alone capable of producing uniform, active, self-denying obedience.

What compassion for the souls and bodies of men, what tender affection, what love to Christ, what solemnity of mind as to death, what conscientiousness, what deep impressions of the responsibility of the sacred ministry, what fear of pride and ambition, what fervor of prayer, what knowledge of the Scriptures, what dependance on the grace of the Holy Spirit—in a word, what attainments in the divine life do these extracts betoken!

If only a few words were altered, and the great doctrine of Protestantism, justification before God in the merits of our Lord and Saviour, were explicitly stated, they would be in the most complete sense evangelical. Still, as they are, they clearly prove that Borromeo was not only the most laborious and beneficent, but the most enlightened and spiritual prelate of his age in the church of Rome.

I do not apologize for the length into which I have been drawn in communicating to the Protestant reader the pleasure which I derived myself from the discovery of such a character as Borromeo. To trace the identity of true religion under the most unfavorable, and almost contradictory appearances, is an office of charity so delightful, as well as profitable, that nothing during my whole tour has disclosed to me a more fruitful source of instruction and joy.

## LETTER XV.

*Pont-beau-voisin, Sept. 20.—Lyon, Sept. 28, 1823.*

Chamberry — A Bookseller — Pont-beau-voisin — Roads — Bishop Berkeley — Sunday at Lyon — Catholic Sermon — Gibbon — Rivers Saone and Rhone — Fourviere — Hotel de Ville — Revolutionary Horrors at Lyon — Speech of Emperor Claudius — Roman Amphitheatre — Martyrs of Lyon — Cimetiere — Arsenal — Death of Rev. S. Arnot — Chamberry Peasant — Notice of Martyrs in Second Century.

LYON, capital of the department of the Rhone, Saturday night, Sept. 20th, 1823, about 789 miles out from Lausanne, and about 2302 from London, by our route.

MY DEAREST SISTER — Chamberry, which we left this morning, contains nearly twelve thousand souls. It is the capital of the duchy of Savoy, situated in a fruitful valley on the borders of Dauphiny, at the conflux of the rivers L'Aisse and D'Albans. It has a cathedral and three other churches, two convents, and about one hundred priests. I went this morning into the cathedral: it is dirty and mean, both within and without. I observed in it three boxes for charity: one of them

for souls in purgatory (I give it word for word;) the second for repairing the church: the third for offerings, without specifying the object—no box for the poor. I asked a person who called himself a bookseller (who, by the bye, was the only one in the town, and actually had only one book to sell, a Code of French laws) about the different institutions for religion. The man's wife, who was standing by, replied, they had an archbishop, who had been simply bishop in Bonaparte's time, but who was now archbishop of Chamberry, and *prince bishop of Geneva!* I stared. She said he was bishop of the Christians at Geneva. I asked her what she called the twenty-five thousand Protestants who inhabited that town? She answered, they were not Christians. I told her, then I was not one myself; she begged pardon, and said she meant apostolical Roman Christians. I told her I believed in the Holy Scriptures, and in Jesus Christ our Lord, and in the doctrine of the apostles, and therefore I was a good apostolical Christian, though not a Papist.

I give this as a trait of character in a bettermost sort of person. It is the natural effect of the doctrine which excludes from everlasting salvation all who belong not to the church of Rome. Bigotry and persecution follow as matters of course. I must say, however, that I have met with many Roman Catholics during my tour, who expressly assured me that they disbelieved this uncharitable tenet. One lady told me she had informed her priest in confession, that she never could receive it. Let only the holy doctrines and holy lives of Protestants be more and more known by the Catholics, and charity must and will overthrow so fatal a dogma. Indeed, if the Holy Scriptures are once generally read, and the other doctrines of Popery must by degrees fall, in spite of Popes and councils. We left Chamberry a quarter before eight.

We have now come seventy-two miles, to this ancient and noble city of Lyon.\* We entered France at twelve, at Pont-beau-voisin. We had amazing difficulty in getting through the custom-house. I had left some necessary papers at Lausanne. The officers were however civil, and after hearing my story, at length allowed us to proceed. I believe we were detained four hours. Travelers cannot be too particular in carrying their papers with them wherever they go. The road was, in two parts of it, perhaps as fine as any thing we have seen. The passages of les Echelles and of la Chaille are most terrific, from the immense rocks through which they have been made, and the fine scenery which surrounds them. These roads were begun by a former duke of Savoy in 1670, and at three different times resumed by Bonaparte without being completed. The present king of Sardinia has this last year or two just accomplished the whole; in fact, this Mount Cenis road, in general, seems to have been a work gradually carried on from the days of Augustus, that is, during eighteen centuries—a space of time sufficiently long. It is but a few years ago, that three or four oxen were regularly yoked to every carriage to aid the horses in the ascent of les Echelles.

\* I observe it is generally spelt Lyons: but in the town itself they carefully omit the final s.

I remember bishop Berkeley gives a frightful account of his passage on new-year's day, 1714. He says he was carried in an open chair by men used to scale these craggy and dangerous rocks, and that his life often depended on a single step. Bonaparte put an end to this by making a tunnel, nine hundred and fifty feet, directly through the opposing rock. At another part of the route, the travellers were let down in a kind of sledge, at a most fearful rate. Much even now remains to be done between Lyon and Turin; as the road for many stages is exceedingly bad. The towns and villages in Dauphiny are very miserable. The priests have mocked, as it were, this misery, by building, in one or two of the market-places, splendid gilt crucifixes, which are in deep contrast with the poverty and wretchedness of every house within view.

*Sunday, one o'clock at noon.*—I have had to-day the singular pleasure of attending a Protestant French church. It was really quite delightful to hear the reader begin the worship of God by reading distinctly two chapters of the New Testament in French, so as to be understood by all the people. The singing; the Ten Commandments, word for word as they are in the Bible; the summary of the Law, exactly as it is in Matt. xxii. 37—39; a public Baptism; the confession of sins; the prayer; the sermon, all charmed me as the spiritual, reasonable, and instructive worship of God. Especially the reading of the Scriptures was so simple, so authoritative, so majestic, so edifying; I do not wonder the Reformers laid so much stress on it. Indeed, I cannot express the striking difference between this simple Protestant worship and the farce, show, and mummery of Popery at Martigny and Milan. All minor differences between Protestant churches, agreeing in the faith and love our Lord Jesus Christ, sink into nothing before the frightful idolatry and superstition of Popery. Disputes about circumstantials are impertinent—divisions odious—love should unite every heart, where main and necessary Scripture truth is felt and acknowledged. Indeed, one great reason of my hurrying on to Lyon against to-day, was to enjoy once more the unspeakable blessing of the pure public worship of Almighty God.

The sermon was, so far as I could hear (for I sat at a distance, and the church was crowded,) pretty good, on an important topic, death; with many striking parts. I regret extremely to add, that there is but one service here on the Sunday, instead of three, or at the least, two, which there surely ought to be, in an immense city like this. In walking to church also, we were distressed to see the shops all half or a third part open, and customers going in and out, with crowds of persons at the coffee-houses. At Milan, the shops were universally shut.

But allow me, my dear sister, to turn to another, and, to me, more solemn topic; this day twenty-two years, I was admitted into the sacred ministry of Christ's church. What reflections crowd upon my mind! May I have grace to remember more and more the vows I then made; the duties to my Saviour and to his flock, which I then undertook; the unnumbered errors and defects of which, alas! I am too conscious, (especially, as archbishop



Usher said on his dying bed, my sins of omission;) the ceaseless mercies which I have received, and the short time which remains for me to labor for my own salvation, and the salvation of others! Here I am, travelling for my health, in a foreign land; thanks be to God, that health is wonderfully restored; so wonderfully, that I am not like the same person. But then I have been silent now fourteen Sundays, and the future is all uncertain. May God enable me, if I am permitted to return home, to feel more lively compassion for my fellow-creatures, to be more dead to worldly things, and to labor more abundantly in the sacred vineyard; and may he pour out his Holy Spirit upon any kind friends who are supplying my lack of service; yea, upon the universal church! Time carries us away as a flood. Souls are passing into eternity. Judgment is near. All is mere trifling compared with eternal salvation.

*Ten o'clock, Sunday night.*—My younger son has been suffering all day with cold in his teeth. There is no fever, no head-ache, nothing but a rheumatic affection of the front teeth; still this is very painful to him, and very embarrassing to me, being without my dearest wife; and thus, it comes to me as a chastisement and admonition from my Heavenly Father. How many, many mercies have we received during our long journey, and how little grateful have we been for them! May this indisposition work in him and in me the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." And on every occasion of suffering, slight, as well as severe, may I ever be disposed to say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

At four this afternoon, I left my elder son to nurse his brother; and went to a Catholic church to hear a celebrated preacher of this town. I placed myself close under the pulpit, so that I understood almost the whole of the sermon; it was an able, energetic, striking discourse; not one word of Popery, properly speaking, (which was the case also, as I have said, at Martigny,) but defective, general, unevangelical, and therefore unscriptural and dangerous. His subject was the happiness of heaven; he drew a striking picture of the glory, power, happiness, honor, &c., of the heavenly state. His immediate point was to prove, from Scripture and experience, how much glory, power, happiness, &c., God bestows on his servants, and even enemies, here on earth; and then to infer the infinitely superior glory of heaven. He cited admirably the cases of Moses, Abraham, Joshua, David, Peter, &c. What then, you say, were the defects? The heaven he described was with the Saviour, without pardon, without holiness; his heaven was an intellectual, poetical, sublime sort of paradise; he took for granted, too, that all were in the right way to it. Thus, almost all the great ends of preaching were lost, and worse than lost.

Still the sermon did me good, because much of it was true, as far as it went; and I was glad to hear a priest stand on Protestant ground, and appeal to the Bible, and the Bible only. Besides, my long absence from home has disposed me to receive with candor and delight any thing that approaches the truth of the Gospel in any part of a discourse. What the apostle calls "itching ears," are soon cured, when a man for three or

four months has scarcely met with a single edifying, solid, scriptural sermon. England, alas! too often undervalues and abuses her abundant privileges. The immense church was crowded to excess, and hung on the lips of the preacher. He preached from memory. His manner was serious, vehement, impassioned. He so affected the people that, at the pauses, positively nearly the whole congregation were in tears. I really think we have much to learn at home as to our manner of preaching; the two Catholic sermons I have heard, were incomparably superior to most of our English ones, in careful preparation, intelligible arrangement, forcible application to the conscience, fervent and earnest delivery; in short, in the whole MANNER of the address.

*Lyon, Tuesday, September 23.*—We are still here; my dear son, though much better, cannot travel. I have called in the first physician in the town; for there are no apothecaries here as in England. The ordinary fee is three francs a visit; but five or six are expected, my banker tells me, of an Englishman. The physician writes prescriptions, which are made up at the druggist's or pastry-cook's—for half his medicines are syrups and sweetmeats. I have sent his brother by the Diligence to Geneva, that he may go on to Lausanne and fetch the rest of the family to me. By returning this way home, they will go very little out of their route, and they will also see Lyon, the second city of France. I am obliged, however, by this plan, to break my engagements with my kind friends at Geneva, which I had fixed for Thursday, the 25th; and I much regret that I shall not revisit Lausanne.

I omitted to see several things there; especially the house and library of Gibbon. My friends told me that the library was locked up—no bad thing for the world; and that the terrace and summer-house, where he completed his history in 1787, were falling into decay.\* He left, like all other

\* The manner in which he records the termination of his work would be more interesting, if the associations raised in the Christian's mind could be separated from the recollection of it.

"It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last line of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame."

This last point was, in his view, the great object of life. Hope, beyond death, he had none. He reluctantly confesses in another place, that "the abbreviation of time and the failure of hope, tinged with a browner shade the evening of life." "The present," he elsewhere acknowledges, "is a fleeting moment, the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful." His attempts to persuade himself that death was distant, are apparent from the following passage:—"This day may possibly be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen years."

He wrote this sentence some time in the year 1788;

daring infidels, a refutation of his principles behind him in the pride, impurity, vanity, and extreme selfishness of his moral character. As to fidelity and trust-worthiness in his history, it has been demonstrated that his statements of facts cannot at all be relied on, where Christianity is concerned. After these fatal deductions, to admit that he had great talents and powers, is only to augment the melancholy impression with which a Christian adverts to the name of a man who has contributed so largely to corrupt the first sources of historical truth.

*Wednesday.*—My eldest son set off in the mail yesterday, at a quarter before three, for Geneva and Lausanne. I sit with my remaining sick boy, read to him, talk with him, amuse him, give him his medicines, and yet contrive to take one or two walks about the town and neighborhood in the course of the day. I can, however, at present give you only a very inadequate account of Lyon. It contains one hundred and seventy-five thousand souls. This is immense for a city not the capital of the country. It was founded by the Romans about forty-two years before the Christian æra, and was called Lugdunum. It is finely situated at the confluence of the Saone and the Rhone, which flow nearly parallel for some time before their junction, and afford room for this noble city to rise on the tongue of land enclosed between the two rivers as they approach. Their channels are nearly equal in breadth, but the Rhone contains the greater volume of water, and rolls on to the Mediterranean. It is just as if London had two rivers like the Thames, between which its chief buildings and streets were raised.

Over these rivers the Lyonese have erected nine bridges, from which there are fine views of the interior of the town. On the banks they have formed delightful quays and walks. This is an advantage peculiar to Lyon. You never saw such beautiful promenades for a mile or two together, on the sides both of the Saone and the Rhone, as there are here. Some of them are bordered with rows of trees, and are little inferior to those of Paris. The spot is pointed out by the guides where Hannibal is supposed to have crossed the Rhone in his celebrated invasion of Italy. The body of the old town is dirty, narrow, dark, miserable; but the new parts are open, spacious, elegant. We are at the Hotel du Providence in the Rue de la Charité. On our right hand, we can see the Rhone; on our left, there is the noble square, or place of Belle Cour, which is amongst the finest in Europe; it has walks of Linden trees on one

but instead of fifteen years of life, he expired almost suddenly on the 16th of January, 1794, after scarcely a third part of the expected time had elapsed—and this of a disease which he had studiously concealed from others, and, as far as he could, from himself, for thirty-three years. So little was he aware of his danger, that he jested with Lord Sheffield on the subject almost to the last; and even when life was expiring, he told a friend that he considered himself to be a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years—this was said just twenty hours before his death.

Such is infidelity—so cold, so dark, so hopeless, so vain, so self-deceiving—I was going to say, so childish and absurd.

side, and the range of hills called La Fourvière, rising beyond.

This hill of Fourvière was the object of my walk yesterday. Its proper name is Fort Viel, Forum Vetus, on which the ancient city of Lyon, or Lugdunum, in the time of the Romans, was founded about the time of the death of Cæsar. The view which I there obtained of the whole neighborhood was superb; absolutely it was enchanting. The vast expanse of unimpeded prospect, the noble rivers, the bridges, the buildings, the quays, the churches, the hills surrounding the town on one side, and clothed with country-houses and vineyards, were all sketched in the magnificent landscape; whilst the distant Alps, including, when the weather is clear, the vast Alp of Mont Blanc, (which may at times be discerned from Dijon, and even Langres, above one hundred and eighty miles distant from it in a direct line,) in the farther ground, formed, as it were, the frame of the picture. Indeed the neighborhood of Lyon is considered as more beautiful, as well as more rich and populous, than the vicinity of Paris.

How painful to turn from all these beauties to the chapel of Notre Dame, on this eminence, which was re-opened by Pope Pius VII., at his last journey through Lyon. The Virgin here has wrought wonderful miracles, and people come on pilgrimage to it! Half the chapel was covered with votive tablets. I think I speak within compass, when I say there were thousands of them. Is this the way to cure the infidelity of the French? When will a little common sense enter the heads of the priests? But I check myself—I must remember that Popery is “a strong delusion;” or, as the Apostle’s expression may perhaps be more literally rendered, “the energy of error!”

I was much pleased with three soldiers whom I met at Fourvière, and who, seeing I was a stranger, really loaded me with civilities, with a gaiety of manner quite surprising—and then positively refused to take any recompense.

The revolutionists in 1793 did infinite mischief at Lyon. The Jacobins hated it for its loyalty, its virtues, its commerce; but the Royalists had the ascendancy in the town, till the convention at Paris ordered it to be besieged. The place was taken by storm, and unknown murders were committed. The statues of Louis the XIV., two fountains, and all the public buildings in Belle Cour, were levelled to the earth. The machinery of the chief manufacturers was broken to pieces, their houses razed to the ground, and themselves led to execution. The guillotine being too tardy an instrument of death, whole parties were crowded into boats and sunk. The convention even decreed the demolition of the entire city, and the extinction of its name. A monument is raised to two hundred and ten Lyonese who were coolly shot after the siege. Such is liberty pushed to licentiousness and outrage, and casting off the government of law.

*Thursday morning, September 25*—Lyon quite charms me. It is increasing daily. Buildings are rising on every side. Commerce has been regularly improving since the peace of 1815. During the revolution all was decaying. The looms for velvet, silk, and gauze, were diminished from



10,000 to 1,600; and the hands employed in the hat manufactories from 8,000 to about the same number. The silk manufacture, which came originally from Italy, is now transferred to England. Still trade here generally is reviving. The printing and bookselling of this place are next to Paris in importance. There is a large military, as well as civil power, in the town. The streets are always crowded with people.

*Friday morning, September 26th, nine o'clock.*—My dear son, thank God, is amending. Yesterday I went to see the Hotel de Ville, and the Palais des Arts. The Hotel de Ville is one of the finest in Europe. It is an immense pile in the form of a quadrangle, with a noble court in the midst. The mayor resides there, and has state apartments, as in our Mansion House. The great staircase is adorned with a painting of the burning of the city, in the first century, as described by Seneca. The large hall was occupied with a balloon and parachute, in which M<sup>lle</sup>. Garnerin is about to ascend *next Sunday*, and which is now exhibiting gratis. The Palais des Arts was, before the revolution, an abbey of Benedictine nuns, (the Garde des Corps and Gens-d'armes have here occupied another convent.) It contains a curious collection of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities. A model of a temple found at Pompeii pleased me extremely.

But the most interesting thing is part of the speech of the emperor Claudius, when censor of Rome, on the question of first admitting into the Roman senate the great personages of the neighborhood of Lyon. It is engraven on bronze, and is now fixed in the wall of the museum, so as to be easily legible. It was found in 1523, in digging a canal through a hill near Lyon. It consists of two columns, and every word is perfectly legible. It is the more valuable because Tacitus, in the eleventh book of his annals, gives this self-same speech, but so altered and embellished as scarcely to retain a trace of the original—the line of argument is quite different. It thus may serve, perhaps, as some test of the fidelity of the other speeches of Tacitus and Livy.

It is a triumphant reflection, that the evidences of the truth of Christianity have been uniformly, and without a single exception, confirmed by all the discoveries of historical monuments during eighteen centuries. I alluded to this source of proof when I was giving you an account of Avenches in Switzerland. Medals, speeches, altars, pillars, chronicles, arches, found in all countries, and of all ages, have united to confirm the facts on which Christianity rests. May this Christianity be purified from superstition and idolatry, and be displayed more and more in its native efficacy on the hearts and lives of mankind! It is not so much evidence that we want, as grace, repentance, faith, charity, holiness, the influences of the blessed Spirit, primitive Christianity embodied in the lives and tempers of Christians.

*Saturday, Sept. 27.*—My dearest John is now nearly well. I expect my dear family from Lausanne to-night, and then our domestic circle will again be complete. I had no spirits yesterday, to go and see any thing; but this morning I have

visited St. Irenée, the site of the ancient city, though now only a suburb. I here visited the Roman baths at the Ursuline Monastery (formerly so, for all the monasteries and convents were abolished at the Revolution.) These baths consist of a series of numerous dark vaults, communicating with each other, about twenty feet under ground; but no longer interesting, except from their antiquity. I then went to what was the garden of the Minimes, and saw the remains of the Roman Amphitheatre, where the early Christians were exposed to the wild beasts. This scene affected me extremely. The form of the Amphitheatre remains, after a lapse of sixteen or seventeen centuries. Some traces may be discovered of the rising seats of turf, and several dilapidated brick vaults seem to indicate the places where the wild beasts, and perhaps the holy martyrs, were guarded. It is capable of holding an immense assemblage—perhaps 30 or 40,000 persons. A still more elevated range of seats, to which you ascend by decayed stone steps, seem to have been the place allotted for the magistrates and regulators of the barbarous shows. A peaceful vineyard now flourishes where these scenes of horror once reigned. The tender garden shrub springs in the seats and vaults. The undisturbed wild flowers perfume the air. A stranger now and then visits the spot, and calmly inquires if that was the Amphitheatre which once filled all Christendom with lamentation. What a monster is persecution, whether Pagan, Popish, or Protestant! And yet, till the beginning of the last century, it was hardly banished from the general habits of Europe.—Would to God that even now it could be said to be utterly rooted out!

I visited, after this, the church of St. Irenée, built in the time of the Romans, when the liberty of public worship was refused the Christians. It is subterraneous, and contains the bones of the many thousand Christians who were martyred in the year 202, under the emperor Severus. It is of this noble army of martyrs that Milner gives such an effecting account. An inscription on the church states, that St. Pothinus was sent by Polycarp, and founded it; and was martyred under the emperor Antoninus; that St. Irenæus succeeded him, and converted an infinite multitude of Pagans, and suffered martyrdom, together with nineteen thousand Christians, besides women and children, in the year 202; and that in the year 470, the church was beautified. I have not an exact recollection of what Milner says, and therefore may be wrong in giving credit to some of these particulars; but I have a strong impression that the main facts agree with the tradition on the spot; and I confess, I beheld the scene with veneration. I could almost forgive the processions which are twice in the year made to this sacred place, if it were not for the excessive ignorance and superstition attending them.

Near to this church are some fine remains of a Roman aqueduct, for conveying water to the city, built at the time of Julius Cæsar. A convent of three hundred nuns has arisen since the peace, in the same place, of the order of St. Michel, where many younger daughters are sent from the best families, to be got out of the way, just the same as under the ancient regime. In saying this, I

do not forget that the education in many of the convents is, in some respects, excellent, and that the larger number of young persons are placed there merely for a few years for that purpose. Still the whole system is decidedly bad, and unfriendly to the highest purposes of a generous education.

The cimetière, or public burial ground, is a fine spacious plot of five hundred feet by eight hundred, planted with trees, and guarded from all outrage. It affords many an affecting, solemn, instructive lesson. One walks amongst the monuments of those who were once gay, and learned, and skilful, and eager, and successful as ourselves; and who thought as little of death as most of those do who stop to number their graves. A brief space of thirty years sweeps off an entire generation, and levels all the momentary distinctions of life. Happy they who so number their days, as to apply their hearts unto wisdom! As I returned to our hotel, I visited the remains of the arsenal, which was burnt down in the siege of 1793. Our physician tells me, the scenes of that period were terrific; he really trembled when he began to talk of it. No wonder Bonaparte was hailed as the deliverer from its horrors. I am struck in passing through the streets near the churches, to see women with stalls selling pictures as offerings to the Virgin; this marks the popular taste for superstition, which is reviving; and is a most unfavorable symptom.

*Saturday evening, 10 o'clock.*—My dearest wife, with my son and daughter, arrived at eight o'clock this evening; all in perfect health, through God's great goodness: I never saw them look so well. Daniel reached Geneva at three o'clock on Wednesday; went the next day to Lausanne, settled every thing there, set off in our other voiture with post-horses on Friday (yesterday) morning, and arrived here safely this evening, after a journey of one hundred and thirty miles. It is quite delightful to me to see them all again in such health and comfort. Ann has brought me three letters from you; one dated July 9th, from Cologne; the second, August 21st; and the third, Sept. 8th: this makes the series complete. The varied information they contain interests me beyond expression.

The death of my dearest brother, and friend Arnott\* wounds me to the heart. What a loss to his family and his parishes! But what a happy Christian death! I am bereaved of a friend not to be replaced; a friend, whose advice, piety, and judgment, were only equalled by his sincerity and tenderness. His sudden departure overwhelms me. He was ten years younger than myself, and died, it seems, after an illness of only a few days. He had been, from his earliest childhood, remarkable for piety. His studies at the University were diligent and successful, and directed to the highest ends. During the time that he was curate at St. John's, his conscientious activity in every branch of his duties was most exemplary. He left me about ten years back, on obtaining a small living in Sussex. Here his wisdom, spirituality of mind,

compassion to the poor, friendliness and devoted zeal, connected with the faithful preaching of the holy truths of the Gospel, gave him such an influence, that he was beloved and honored by all his parishioners. It had been his practice from his youth to read the entire Bible through every year—an admirable trait, and quite characteristic of the man. The clergyman who attended his dying bed, has sent me a most interesting account of the last scenes. Undisturbed, calm, resigned, with a meek reliance on the merits of his Saviour, and anticipating with sacred pleasure the joy and holiness of heaven, he fell asleep in Christ.

*Sunday morning, Sept. 28th.*—Thank God, we have all had a peaceful night. This is my fifteenth Sunday of entire silence and rest from the composition and delivery of sermons. I attribute my present change of health, under God, to this cessation from labor. But it is painful to me. My Sundays are my grief and burden. The sudden call of my dear Arnott fills me with solemn anticipations of my own account, so soon to be rendered at the bar of Christ my Saviour. I beg the earnest prayers of all my friends, that I may be enabled to "walk humbly with my God;" and at length "finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." My gratitude in having all my dear family well and comfortable around me, is great.

Yours,

D. W.

#### NOTICE OF A CHAMBERRY PEASANT.

As the impression I received of the religious state of Chamberry was unfavorable, I feel a peculiar pleasure in relating the following anecdote. Two English ladies were passing through a valley in the neighborhood of Chamberry a year or two back. They met a female peasant of an interesting appearance, apparently between twenty and thirty years of age. They engaged in conversation with her, and found she was in service, and had by her industry saved money enough to buy a cow, which she had presented to her parents. Upon turning the conversation towards religion, she took out a book in which was the following paper sealed in it, which her priest had given her. I add, though it is scarcely worth while, a translation, as the lines happen to be short.

Chrétien souviens tu que	Christian, remember
tu as aujourd'hui	that thou hast to-day
Un Dieu à glorifier,	A God to glorify,
Un Christ à imiter,	A Christ to imitate,
Tous les anges à honorer,	All the angels to honor,
Une ame à sauver,	A soul to save,
Un corps à mortifier,	A body to mortify,
Des vertus à demander,	Virtues to implore,
Des péchés à pleurer,	Sins to weep over,
Un paradis à gagner,	A paradise to gain,
Un enfer à éviter,	A hell to avoid,
Une éternité à méditer,	An eternity to meditate on,
Un temps à ménager,	Time to husband,
Un prochain à édifier,	A neighbor to edify,

\* The Rev. Samuel Arnott, perpetual curate of Eastbourne, near Midhurst.



Un monde à appréhender,	A world to fear,
Des demons à combattre	Devils to combat,
Des passions à abattre,	Passions to subdue,
Et, peut-être, la mort à	And, perhaps, death to
souffrir,	suffer,
Et le jugement à subir.	And judgment to undergo.

Upon further talking with her, she seemed really impressed with the importance of the truths contained in the paper, and to be endeavoring to practice them daily. I cannot describe the pleasure which such individual facts afford me. The load which weighs upon my mind when I reflect on the system of Popery, is sensibly lightened when I find that by a happy inconsistency (which is not confined to the Roman Catholic communion) the hearts and lives of many are so much better than their creed would lead one to expect. May God increase the number!

#### NOTICE OF MARTYRS OF LYON.

Upon looking carefully into Milner's Ecclesiastical History, since I came home, I find there were two early persecutions of the Christians at Vienne and Lyon (neighboring French towns,) one about the year of our Lord 169, under the emperor Marcus Antoninus; the second under Septimus Severus, about the year 202. The first of these is best known, and the accounts in Milner refer to it. The scene of its cruel executions was the amphitheatre which I visited as I have above mentioned. The second is not so credibly attested, but at the same time may on the whole be believed to have taken place. The church of St. Irenée relates exclusively to it. Pothinus was bishop of Lyon during the first cruelties; he had been a disciple of the blessed Polycarp, the contemporary of the apostle John. He perished about the year 169, being upwards of ninety years of age; he had been sent, in all probability, by Polycarp from Smyrna to found these French churches; for the merchants of Smyrna and Lyon were the chief navigators of the Mediterranean sea. This could not be very long before the persecution burst out. He was accompanied in his apostolical labors by Irenæus, an Asiatic Greek also, who wrote the interesting and authentic account of the first acts of the martyrs, preserved by Eusebius, and given so well by Milner. Irenæus succeeded Pothinus as bishop, and suffered martyrdom in the persecution of 202.

In the first persecution of 169, the power of divine grace appeared little less than apostolical in the church of Lyon. The Christians were exposed not once only, but several times to the wild beasts in the very amphitheatre over which I walked—one day extraordinary of these brutal shows was given to the people, for the sake of exposing a great number of Christians. Some were previously led round the amphitheatre, a tablet being carried before them, simply with the words, "These are Christians;" for the term Christian was then used instead of arguments, just as the words Lollard, Puritan, Pietist, Methodist, Calvinist, Evangelical, Saint, &c. have since supplied its place. The Christians, if the beasts failed to destroy them, were placed in hot iron

chairs. A most eminent female martyr, Blandina, was four several times tormented in the most savage manner. Once she was suspended from a stake in the form of a cross, and exposed as food to the wild beasts, none of whom however at that time touched her; on another day she was first scourged, then torn by the beasts in the amphitheatre, then placed in the scorching iron chair, and lastly, enclosed in a net and thrown to a bull, which having tossed her for some time, she breathed her last in the firm faith of Christ. Under all these sufferings the martyrs remained unmoved, yea, rejoiced in the name of the Lord Jesus, and were filled with the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and the hopes of a blessed resurrection. I really cannot divest my mind of the associations awakened by these affecting circumstances, connected with my visit to the very spot where they occurred.

The second persecution took place when Irenæus was bishop, in the year 202, about thirty or forty years after the first, and under the emperor Severus, who is generally thought to have been governor of Lyon during the preceding one. Our accounts of it are slender. Gregory of Tours and the ancient martyrologists inform us, "that after several torments Irenæus was put to death, and together with him almost all the Christians of that populous city, whose numbers could not be reckoned, so that the streets of Lyon flowed with the blood of Christians." Mr. Milner thinks this statement may be somewhat exaggerated; but he considers that there is no circumstance of improbability in the fact itself, and that the known cruelty of Severus, and his former connection with Lyon, gives to the persecution a strong degree of credibility. It is to this second persecution that the subterranean church of St. Irenée, and the inscription concerning the nineteen thousand Christians, refers. Milner says nothing of the vestiges and records of these two fiery trials, still subsisting at Lyon. But I cannot help thinking they add some weight to facts already attested by the evidence which I have detailed. At least to my mind the connection is most instructive and affecting.

We find that about the year 250, the Gospel which had so gloriously begun in Lyon, was flourishing and diffusing itself in France. A bishop named Saturninus was then at Thoulouse. Several other churches had been founded, as at Tours, Arles, Narbonne, and Paris. The bishops of Thoulouse and Paris afterwards suffered for the faith of Christ; but they left churches, in all probability, very flourishing in piety. And France in general was blessed with the light of salvation.

I say nothing here of Peter Waldo, the celebrated Reformer, of Lyon, because he did not flourish till the twelfth century. But I cannot altogether omit the name of Agobard, archbishop of Lyon, in the ninth century, who wrote against the abuse of pictures and images, and boldly maintained that we ought not to worship any image of God, except that which is God himself, his eternal Son; and that there is no other mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ, both God and man—an early and clear testimony against Popish corruptions.

## LETTER XVI.

*Lyon, September 28.—Geneva, October 6th, 1823.*

Second Sunday at Lyon—Library—Hotel Dieu—Hotel de la Charité—Sick Family—Journey to Geneva—Professor of Lausanne—Perte du Rhone L'Ecluse—Ferne—Voltaire—Catholics at Geneva—Fine Walks—Translation of Scott—Sagny—Rejected Regent—Religious Doctrine—Plan of Central Switzerland—Cathedral—Library—English Clergy—Sunday at Geneva—Minister from Les Cevennes—Reglement—M. Simond's defence answered.

*LYON, Sept. 28, 1823, Sunday evening.*

MY DEAREST SISTER—Our sermon this morning, at the Protestant church was good; but not so simple and awakening as the vast concerns of eternity demand at the hand of the minister of the Gospel. I spoke, after service, to a respectable gentleman near me, who turned out to be a minister, the former pastor of a French Protestant church; for it is a curious thing, that after a certain age the Protestant clergy, though in the possession of all their powers, and in tolerably good health, retire, as no longer capable of exciting that effect which depends on powerful and energetic voice and action. This is quite shocking. It makes preaching a sort of rhetorical declamation, instead of the simple and authoritative manifestation of the truth of the Gospel. It commends itself to the taste, rather than the consciences of men. It relies on "the enticing words of man's wisdom," rather than the grace and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. In short, it "makes the Cross of Christ of none effect." This minister informed me there were five or six thousand Protestants in and about Lyon; and yet only one church, and one service in that church. There is a Bible Society which he tells me is not very flourishing. The government now is not favorable to the Protestants.

In the Catholic churches I could find out no sermon. I sent out a servant to inquire with much care; I also searched myself; but in vain. The interesting discourse of last Sunday, made me quite eager to hear a second. Thus, one hundred and seventy-five thousand souls were, I fear, without any public instruction to-day on the doctrine of salvation, except the few hundreds at the Protestant church. In fact, the Sabbath, which should be "our delight, holy of the Lord and honorable," is lost on the continent. When it is spoken of, it is called a fête or holy-day, indiscriminately with the nativity or assumption of the Virgin Mary; and these fêtes are the regular seasons of public processions, and celebrations. Nay, the newspapers, the theatres, &c., are actually suspended on St. Francis' day or the feast of the Virgin; but on the Sunday are regularly carried on, and more eagerly followed than ever. The Sunday is, in short, the day for shows, amusements, dissipation, vicious pleasures of every kind.

There are, of course, thousands in the Protestant churches who keep sacred this holy day, and rejoice in its blessed services as much as the most devout Englishman can do. In the Catholic

church also there are doubtless many, many real servants of Christ who do the same. But speaking generally, the Sabbath is utterly lost on the continent—it is no longer the LORD'S DAY, but the day of the god of this world. A new reformation is wanted. The spirit of the martyrs of Lyon is extinct. May the same grace which formed that noble army in the early ages of Christianity, descend again on Lyon in these latter times? And may England avoid, as the most fatal of downfalls, the desecration of the holy Sabbath! Our Sunday travelling, Sunday visits, and above all, Sunday newspapers, terrify my mind. I cannot conceive how it is that the mere mask of loyalty and church principles, assumed by some of these demoralizing journals, should blind the judgment of any sincere Christian to their most pernicious tendency.—We have had our two private services. My heart is at St. John's.

*Monday, September 29th.*—I have but little to say to-day; indeed, my letters must, of necessity, become dull and uninteresting now we are all stationary in a town. My eldest son and I have visited this morning the public library, which contains one hundred and twenty thousand volumes, the largest provincial collection in France. It occupies a fine building on the right bank of the Rhone. We saw a part of a bomb which, in 1793, had been thrown by the mad revolutionists into the library. It penetrated a large globe; the part of the bomb, as well as the hole it made, remained unaltered.

We went next to L'Hôtel Dieu, an immense hospital, one of the honors and ornaments of France. It was first founded in the sixth century; the chief rooms are divided into four compartments, with an altar in the middle, from which the prayers may be heard by all the patients. There are eleven hundred beds, one hundred and fifty nurses, eight physicians, and a laboratory for medicines. The nurses are called "Les Sœurs de la Charité." They form a religious order, and entirely devote themselves to attendance on the sick in the hospital. They wear a dress of brown stuff—their crucifix hangs low from the neck—their whole appearance is clean and respectable. This is a religious body, like that at Great St. Bernard, really useful to the community; and it gives me sincere pleasure to recognize the fact. Would to God there were more such institutions as "the salt of the earth," amidst the corrupt mass of Popish errors! The front of the hospital facing the Rhone is magnificent, and is now nearly completed. The bedsteads of the patients are of iron, and every thing had the appearance of cleanliness and comfort.

The hospice de la Charité next attracted our curiosity; it is quite a separate thing from the former. It is a religious establishment, consisting of fifty sisters, and twenty brethren, de la Charité; these superintend the house, which receives three or four hundred old persons above the age of seventy, who are entirely supported, clothed, and fed in the hospice. It maintains also seven or eight thousand foundlings or orphan children, chiefly at nurseries in the country. It admits also *des filles enceintes*, for their lying-in. This part of the plan fills me with great apprehension as to its moral tendency. It seems to me to be a



premium upon vice. The fearful numbers of exposed or foundling children is a mournful proof of degenerated morals; one thousand three hundred and eighty have been here received this year, that is in nine months; a large proportion, I should think, of all the births at Lyon.\*

I am quite sure that the licensing and raising taxes from gambling houses, and other places of a profligate character, must directly tend to countenance and increase fatal immoralities. How infinitely preferable is the honest integrity of our English laws, which connive at no species of vice, much less attempt to raise taxes from the commission of gross crimes against society. The whole system must be rotten to the core to admit of this recognition and encouragement of the very worst evils. It is a still viler practice to suffer wretches stationed within houses of the most abandoned description, to be inviting passengers to enter, with a loud voice, and in the middle of the day. What a falling off, since the noble spirit of piety in this very town could induce so many thousands to die as martyrs for the name of the Lord Jesus! What a difference between the second and the nineteenth century! Then men were ready to suffer death rather than sin against God: now they tolerate the most open seductions to vice and iniquity.

*Tuesday, one o'clock, noon.*—A respectable Protestant minister residing at Lyon, called on me yesterday. I had a long conversation with him, in which he endeavored to excuse, though he could not defend, the *règlement* at Geneva. This morning I went and breakfasted with him and his wife and family; all amiable, obliging; but I should have rejoiced to have seen something more of the spirit of real Christianity. He had the finest collection of engravings of Swiss scenery that I have yet seen; and no wonder. When a youth, he ascended Mont Blanc with his father and M. De Saussure, in 1786. In the course of conversation he expressed great surprise at the state of Ireland—at our refusing the Catholics civil privileges—at our want of church room—at our neglect of the education of our poor—at the disturbances and riots in England. I made such answers as I could on these points. He informed me also of his intention of visiting London at the time of our great religious meetings. This is not the first occasion I have had to observe the many incidental but important benefits of our public anniversaries. They attract the regard of foreigners; and are the means of encouraging or kindling a spirit of piety in those who attend them at first chiefly from curiosity!

Before I left him, he requested me to visit an English family in his neighborhood which had just lost its father. I went. I found a widow and four grown-up daughters. What was my astonish-

ment to discover, after a while, that it was a family who had lived in the very house in which I was born, in London! They have been three years at Lyon. They are extremely well spoken of. The father died yesterday afternoon. The visit, though short, seemed much to relieve them. Thus, in a foreign land, some little duties of charity present themselves to those who are willing to perform them. If God had pleased, the affliction and death might have been in my own house! My son Daniel is to attend the funeral for me tomorrow; for I am obliged to go off, for a few days, to Geneva, about Scott's Bible. I should have gone last week, if my son's illness had not prevented me. My friends are waiting to hold the promised meeting. I intend rejoining my family on Tuesday at Dijon, on the way to Paris.

*Geneva, 116 miles from Lyon, Wednesday evening, 7 o'clock, Oct. 1, 1823.*—I set off in the mail from Lyon at three yesterday afternoon, and arrived here at half past three this afternoon. This said mail coach is a heavy, lumbering carriage, with an infinity of luggage, travelling four miles and three quarters in the hour. I was in the cabriolet, a sort of outside seat, in front of the carriage, with the prolonged roof of the coach to cover me, and a good leather to draw up in front; so that I paid the same as for an inside place, (twenty-two francs, about seventeen shillings for 116 miles.) The evening and night were warm and fine, and the morning was charming. The country which we passed before night-fall was beautiful, on the banks of the Rhone, which you remember flows from Geneva to Lyon. We had supper at ten o'clock, at Pont d'Ain, and I actually dozed and slept all the night afterwards, and a good part of to-day.

We breakfasted at Bellegarde at eight, and walked to see what is called *La Perte du Rhone*—the Loss of the Rhone; a most curious phenomenon. The Rhone flows majestically from Geneva, in a bed of two or three hundred feet, till it reaches a defile between the mountains Jura and Vouache, where it has only from sixty to one hundred and twenty feet width. The rocks then become narrower and narrower, till such huge and insuperable masses present themselves, that the river, unable to break through them, has made itself a passage underneath. The Rhone disappears for sixty feet. Its breadth at this point is about fifteen feet. It then rises again, and soon resumes its noble tide. I never saw any thing at all resembling it: you stand upon the bridge, and view on one side of it the fine river flowing along; and on the other side, where you expect it to continue its course, there is nothing to be seen but a bed of rocks perfectly dry. The fact is, the river engulphs itself under the ruins of the masses fallen from the neighboring mountains; so that you may go down by a ladder and examine the vast defile, the walls of which are 150 feet deep. At the point where the rocks first narrow themselves a strong fort is built, *L'Ecluse*, between the mountains Jura and Vouache, which Julius Cæsar described one thousand eight hundred years ago.\*

\* The moral state of the population of Paris is not better. I observe in the statistical tables of that city, that out of 27,070 births in the year 1823, 9,806 were of natural children, being rather more than a third part of the total number. The union of misery with vice may be inferred from the fact, that as nearly as possible, the same proportion of persons died in the public hospitals of that city; i. e. 8,227 out of a total of 24,500.

\* Iter angustum et difficile inter Montem Jura et flumen Rhodanum, vix qua singulares curri ducuntur. De Bell. Gall. l. i. c. 6.

It is the only entrance into France from the French part of Switzerland.

As we drew near Geneva we passed Ferney, and I ran up to see the château where Voltaire lived, and the church which, in hypocrisy the most detestable, he built near it. The church is low and mean, the shelving roof reaching almost to the ground. It is inscribed to Almighty God. The usual sort of crucifix is within. Still it was something for Christianity to have forced such a man to acknowledge in any way her importance and truth.

One of the first effects of the revival of true religion, or even of sound learning, in France, I should think, would be to lower the credit of this profligate, crafty, superficial, ignorant, incorrect writer. What plea can the poignancy of wit, or the force of satire, or the talent of ridicule, or the possession of a fascinating style, or the power of brilliant description, or an extensive superficial knowledge of sciences, or an affected humanity on a few popular occasions, form, in a Christian country, for a man who employed them all, with a bitterness and ferocity of mind amounting almost to madness, against the Christian religion and the person of the Saviour? It is an unhappy circumstance that the present French government has mingled party politics with his name, and thus attached a new popularity to his impious works. Twenty years ago he was comparatively forgotten. No new edition of his writings was thought of. At the restoration, in 1814, his tomb was disturbed, and indignities offered to his remains. The consequence of this ill-judged and petty revenge has been, that ten or more large editions of his works have been sold since; some of them in the form of small pamphlets, by a weekly publication, for the cottages of the poor.\*

\* When I arrived at Paris, one of the first things I heard was, that a Bible Society had been formed at Ferney, chiefly by the aid of the baron de Staël. What a noble triumph for Christianity over the most daring infidelity!

It is delightful for me to be able to add, that a Protestant church is about to be built at Ferney; and that so little have the principles of Voltaire succeeded in permanently effacing the memory of Christianity from the minds of men, even in his own village, that a contest is likely to arise amongst the two great bodies of Christians in France, as to which shall have the honor of raising a second edifice there for the purposes of public worship in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. I give the following extract with peculiar feelings of joy. The patronage of the French government is a most gratifying circumstance indeed.

"It is intended to erect a Protestant church at Ferney, which will be at the same time a monument of the triumph of Christian principles, and of the progress of religious liberty. The French government has granted one hundred Napoleons for that purpose. The king of the Netherlands has given a donation of fifty Napoleons, to promote the object.

"Since it has been announced that a Protestant church is in progress, the Roman Catholics have determined to erect a splendid structure there; and it is greatly to be feared that the completion of the Catholic church will reproach the tardiness and interference of Protestants in affording the means of completing the yet unfinished erection designed for Protestant worship."

I am now at Geneva, for the purpose of inquiring after the translation of Scott. It is quite painful to me to be thus separated so often from my dear family; but circumstances of duty render it indispensable. Before I finish to-night, tired as I am, I must tell you what peculiarly agreeable companions I had on the road; a professor of divinity at Lausanne, a great friend of the Bible Society, and his family. We soon became acquainted, and had a great deal of interesting conversation. I tried to do some good to a pious, but apparently timid man. It was an occasion, which I endeavored to use to the very best of my judgment, especially in the way of removing prejudice and stimulating to zeal. I could not but observe the marked respect which he paid to our English episcopal church. Indeed I have often noticed that the most enlightened and best informed ministers of the foreign reformed churches, have no dislike to the episcopal model; but, on the contrary, prefer it to their own, as more scriptural in itself, and as clearly supported by antiquity from the very age of the apostles. One most pious minister told me, that he believed if Calvin and Beza had adopted the wise and moderate course of our English Reformers, on these points, the whole of France would have been Protestant. In fact, I think it is now admitted generally by the most competent judges, that the violent rejection of the ancient ecclesiastical government by bishops, and an eager interference in secular disputes and affairs appertaining to the state, were amongst the chief external hindrances to the progress of the Reformation. But I must really wish you good night.

*Geneva, Thursday, October 2, three o'clock.*—Thank God I slept twelve hours last night.—This morning I have been walking about the town, partly on the affair of the translation, and partly to obtain further information as to the moral and religious habits of the town. In passing along the streets, I observed a procession of Catholic priests, and followed them into the Catholic church. They were celebrating mass for the repose of the soul of the late Pope. An immense kind of tomb was erected in the middle of the church, with inscriptions on each side, and bougies lighted all around. Printed papers were given about in the church, with a copy of the inscriptions, and an extract from an artful seductive letter, of the late Pope, relative to the Genevese.

One of the inscriptions was the famous text, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;"—quite forgetting, or perverting, the whole scope of the passage;—for every candid reader sees that our Lord spoke of Peter, not personally, but instrumentally, as confessing the deity and mediation of Christ, and about to preach this for the conversion of mankind; and that those can claim the promise, and those only, in each succeeding age, who answer to the character to which it was made. But any thing serves for a pretext where the holy Scriptures are unknown. What most struck me was, to see this in the heart and centre of a Protestant city. It was, however, the French who first compelled the Genevese to admit the Catholics.

In coming from Lyon to Geneva, I noticed that the postillions and common people rather ri-



douled the priests than otherwise. At dinner to-day, at the table-d'hôte, I met three French gentlemen, pretty well informed; Bonaparte was the topic of their admiration; they also much praised England for the unity which animated it the moment any common danger threatened; this formed, in their view, the greatness of our nation.—The environs of Geneva are very fine. I walked to-day, on the bastion, or promenade of the Rhone, at the end of which there is a charming view of the lake and adjoining country. La Treille is another beautiful promenade of a similar kind. But the town itself is crowded and mean, except the upper streets and buildings on the summit of the hill, which are noble and handsome. The weather is cold—a good deal of snow fell last night on the Jura, over which I passed on Tuesday; and on Mount St. Bernard, I understand, it lies four feet deep, with so strong a wind as almost to carry away the traveller.

*Eight o'clock.*—I have had a meeting with the translators of Scott, and have been delighted. All is going on well. The chief translator has a secretary to copy the manuscript—every thing promises that St. Matthew will be ready for the press in a few months. I was introduced to a French minister of Hamburgh, of rare talents, and as rare piety, who will, I trust, help me. I shall, however, have enough to do, both here and at Paris, to arrange details. As I went to the meeting, I called on a gentleman to whom I had an introduction. I was grieved at the spirit of prejudice and bigotry which he showed against all sorts of evangelical truth—a harsh, violent, unpracticable man—confessedly a Socinian in principle. He really frightened me by his fierce attack on spiritual religion. What a blessing to have been educated in sounder views of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, and to have some hope that we know and love that Saviour in sincerity of heart! If any thing can be wrong, it must be that unrelenting proud spirit which aims at dishonoring the Lord Jesus—to exalt whom, in his deity and atonement, was the great scope of the apostolic writers.

I forgot to say, that my friend, the professor of Lausanne, told me that he had distributed near eight thousand Bibles in his canton, and finds that six thousand more will be wanted, in order to supply the whole deficiency; he has also nearly raised a fund, the interest of which will supply the poor of the canton de Vaud with Bibles in perpetuity. How much solid good may one man do, and a man who, in some respects, may be deemed too fearful; and what a public benefit is the Bible Society, to present a suitable object to such a man; and what a seed of future blessings does the permanent circulation of Bibles in a whole canton, cast in the earth, as it were, and leave there to vegetate, and to produce, by the grace of God, in after years, an abundant harvest!

*Friday evening, half-past nine, October 3.*—This morning, at nine, I accompanied some pious friends to Satigny, about six miles from Geneva. The morning was wet; but the ride was through a fine country. Satigny contains about one thousand two hundred souls; towards whom the minister I went to visit is a true shepherd. We had a little committee for four hours on the affair of

Scott's Bible. My friend from Hamburgh has agreed to undertake the translation of Milner's Church History, and thus relieve my chief translator of a work for which he was engaged, and leave him at liberty to devote himself to Scott.

We returned from Satigny about four, and as soon as I had dined, I went to hear an excellent minister, who was some time since removed from his office in the college at Geneva on account of his evangelical sentiments. I was pleased. His manner was so pathetic, so calm, so persuasive, and his matter, upon the whole, so edifying, that I have scarcely heard any thing like it since I left London. He is a valuable man, a deeply pious, spiritually-minded Christian, and a preacher of first-rate powers: there is an inexpressible unction in all he delivers. Still his doctrine is a little too high, in my opinion, to be quite scriptural or safe in the long run; he does not sufficiently unite the perceptive and cautionary parts of Holy Writ with the consolatory and elevating—a fault not important in a single discourse, but momentous as extending over the whole system of a minister's instructions; and more especially if he stand almost alone, or be watched and suspected by his superiors in the church, or attract particular observation on account of the difficulties of his situation.

It is one thing to preach the fall of man, his impotency and ruin, justification by faith only adoption, salvation by grace, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the joy and comfort of communion with our heavenly Father, the merciful will of God in our election and in the power and grace which preserves to everlasting life—in connection with the warnings, alarms, cautions, threatenings, precepts, and general commands of God, as they lie in Holy Scripture: and to preach these doctrines without such authoritative and indispensable accompaniments. The two things are quite distinct. The one produces the real fruits of holy consistent love and obedience; the other is most defective in this important respect, as well as in many others. In short, the one is scriptural, unerring truth; the other a human, fallible system. I am sure the Reformers well understood this distinction. It is quite surprising to observe the wisdom and moderation of their writings. It was not their manner to push any one particular doctrine to excess, much less to exclude the practical parts of Christianity. Let any one read the publications of Luther or Melancthon, Calvin, or Beza, Zuingli or Bullinger, Cranmer or Jewel—especially let him peruse the Book of Homilies of the church of England, and he will be convinced of what I say. In fact, one of the sorest causes of grief to these holy men was the appearance, from time to time, of indiscreet and unscriptural teachers in the Protestant bodies, who “drew away disciples after them.”

Still the sermon, which has drawn forth all these remarks, did me good. I passed over what I thought less scriptural; and was edified, animated, cheered by the general tenor of the address. Whilst I was with my friend and translator, I looked for a minute into Milner's History, and found, to my delight, that the martyrs at Lyon were amongst the most holy of the primitive Christians. I now look back on Lyon, its amphitheatre,

theatre, its subterraneous church, &c. with double interest.

I forgot to say that the king of the Netherlands has begun to appoint the ministers to the Protestant churches, when they are vacant; because the dissensions and animosities occasioned by the elections threw the towns into confusion. This right the king has just claimed, as I am informed, without asking any one's leave. Our king's prerogative of nominating bishops and deans was derived from a different source. The Reformation placed it in his hands when the supremacy of Rome was disavowed. But the chapters of cathedrals, I suppose, originally lost the choice from similar mischiefs. Popular elections in the church are the worst of all evils. In England all these appointments pass through the hands of the known and responsible ministers of the crown, which secures many of the ends of a free election without its attendant inconveniences. May the grace of God descend on our happy country, and sway public opinion more and more on matters of religion; and our sees will be proportionally adorned with primitive and apostolical pastors.

I observe everywhere a certain jealousy of England in the breasts of the people abroad, and even of some good people. This feeling probably would not exist to the degree it does, if English travellers conducted themselves with sound judgment, discretion, and Christian affection. Even now there are many thousand continental Christians who feel and express the sincerest love and the strongest attachment to their British brethren. Still I shall need much prudence in managing the translation of Scott, and obtaining an entrance for it amongst the great body of Protestants all over the continent who speak or read French—for my object is nothing less. The English and French languages divide the civilized world. I see clearly that the project could only be safely trusted to private hands; a public society would not only spoil the work as a literary performance, but excite additional distrust and suspicion under the present circumstances of the continent.

*Saturday evening, nine o'clock, October 4.*—I have had a very long, interesting, and instructive day. I have been out ten hours visiting the town. The views from Geneva—for here I must begin my story—are most beautiful. From the fortifications, you behold on all sides a fruitful and variegated country; with the Alps and nearer foreground of mountains covered with snow. I sat for a minute on a bench, about three o'clock, just out of the town, and I could not help quite breaking out into exclamations of surprise at the enchanting prospect around me. I took a boat afterwards, and rowed (for the last time) on this lovely lake. I was more delighted, if possible, than ever. But I must really cease to talk of my impressions of Swiss scenery. I am, perhaps, more enthusiastic on this subject just now, because I have seen to-day an admirable model of the greater part of my Swiss tour. It was twenty-six feet long by eighteen. The scale was small, Mont Blanc being only eleven inches high, instead of fifteen thousand five hundred and thirty feet; but it was quite sufficient to recal all my feelings of pleasure. It included Geneva on one

side, and the Grimsel, Furca, Lucern, &c. on the others. I believe I told you that I saw a similar model of the centre of Switzerland, at Lucern, by general Pfyffer.

The next object I must mention is the Cathedral, a fine, spacious, unadorned building, with benches only (like all the Reformed churches,) and the names of each proprietor pasted on the back of his seat. It contains the tomb of Henry Duc de Rohan the chief of the Protestant party in France, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the time of the Romans, a temple of the sun stood on the spot. The noble reformers and divines of Geneva who had preached there two or three centuries back, came forcibly to my recollection, as I walked through the solemn aisles—Farel—Viret—Calvin—Beza—Turretin, &c. For after all, it is not the buildings but the men who filled them, and preached the Gospel of Christ to a lost world, which gives the real interest, and excites the warmest and most grateful associations of thought in such visits.

I visited after this the public library of fifty thousand volumes, which is open to all the city. It is curious to learn that haberdashers, tailors, watch-makers, pastry-cooks, carpenters, porters, journeymen, citizens of every class flock every Tuesday to receive or change their books—four hundred persons of the common people on an average; and that they take out, not merely books of amusement, but of history, philosophy, theology. Accordingly most persons here are *savans*. Indeed, ever since the period of the Reformation, the sciences, the arts, and industry have flourished here exceedingly. There is no city in Europe which has produced so great a number of illustrious writers, in proportion to its population; there is none where ease and independence have so much reigned; and where knowledge has been so generally diffused. Even now extraordinary care is paid to education; and though its incorporation with France for sixteen years must, in various ways, have been injurious to it, yet it retains still the habits of a small and free town. The effect of all this on real religion and on the moral habits of the people; especially since the infection of infidel principles has tainted it; cannot be doubted—the pride of half-learning is a most dangerous thing in every view, and most of all as it respects a real submission of the understanding and heart to the doctrines and grace of the Gospel.—I speak of course generally.

Amongst the curiosities of the library, I give the first place to Calvin's sermons and letters, which I venerated, though I could not decipher his hand-writing—it is the most perplexed of any I have seen; that of Farel and Viret, his fellow-reformers, is much more intelligible. I forgot to say that I saw the spot where these reformers first preached at Geneva. A letter of our Sir Isaac Newton pleased me in another view. There were collections also of the letters of Beza and Bullinger. A volume of St. Austin's homilies, on papyrus, of the sixth century, was curious. A copy of Cicero de Officiis, printed at Mentz, in 1465, just after the invention of printing, had a notice at the end, boasting that the work had not been done with the pen, nor with ink, but accomplished by a certain *magnificent art newly discovered*. What



immense progress has that art since made—what an engine of good and of evil is the press become in every free state! A noble copy of the vulgate of the eighth century contained the disputed passage, 1 John v. 8, 9. A book of Philip le Bel, of the year 1314, was on boards of wood, covered with black wax, and written with a stylus or iron pen.

Let me now mention some of the persons whom I have seen to-day. I have been introduced to several of the professors and pastors. One allowed me to talk with him freely. He was complaining of the new dissidents from the national Genevese church. I told him, the only way to keep a church united was to preach plainly and simply the Gospel of Christ; that if this was not done at Geneva, the dissensions would increase more and more. He replied, that during the last century, Voltaire was read by every shop-boy; and that the clergy, to keep the people Christians, confined themselves to moral topics merely; now, however, the clergy were beginning to preach the Gospel, because the times required it. I observed upon this, that the Gospel was the same in every age, and that truth and duty, not fashion, were the rule of a minister's conduct. I added, that though I did not myself, in every particular, agree with Calvin, yet on the points of the proper and supreme deity of Christ, the propitiation of his death, the fall of man, justification by faith, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and good works as the fruit of faith, I fully accorded with him; and that the first men in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and all the English clergy (twelve thousand or more in number,) agreed with me in the main as to these doctrines, though many would, undoubtedly, differ from me as to the particular manner of preaching and applying them. He received all I said with perfect good temper.

I have not time to-night (for it is half-past ten) to tell you of several other interviews; I will only say, I sat an hour in the evening with my friend from Hamburg, who delighted me with an account of the revival of religion at that place—an impression made in the town—numbers converted—several young ministers raised up. My heart was rejoiced. The Gospel, wherever it is truly preached, is still “the power of God to salvation.” Let us pray more fervently for the attendant grace of the Holy Spirit, and ministers will not be wanting to preach, nor congregations to hear and receive this blessed revelation of mercy.

*Sunday afternoon, three o'clock, Oct. 5.*—I went this morning at ten, to hear a celebrated preacher of this town. I was grieved. Talent mis-employed, zeal wasted, arguments false or insufficient—all fundamentally wrong. A sermon on affliction, leaving out almost all the main topics, and grossly mistaking others. The church was full—congregation attentive—delivery good—matter ably arranged—all right, except the entire doctrine of the discourse. This was far more deficiently and erroneously treated than in the Catholic sermons at Martigny and Lyon. A Socinian might have preached it. After the sermon, I had a conference with a pious, amiable, aged minister, who mourns over the state of religion here, and prays and hopes for a gradual improvement in the body of pastors. He tells me, that subscription to the Helvetic con-

fession, which resembles our thirty-nine articles, was abolished about a hundred years since, by the council of state, in consequence of the vehement disputes of the pastors amongst themselves; that the catechism was set aside in 1788; and that the *Règlement* followed in 1817.

At twelve o'clock I went to the hospital, and heard an excellent sermon from an English clergyman. It did me good. The matter of it was as much superior to that which I had heard earlier in the morning, as the manner, composition, and delivery, were inferior. The contrast was striking; the French sermon, able, well-arranged, forcible—delivered with the whole soul of the preacher; the English, feeble, unimpressive—delivered with the indifference of a school-boy. I am far from supposing my fellow-countryman was aware of this; indeed I am persuaded he was not; but I state the impression as it was made on my mind at the time. The minister of the Gospel has not only to deliver certain truths, but to deliver them with solemnity, the earnestness, the affection, the force necessary to arrest the consciences and touch the hearts of men. Sermons carelessly or tamely delivered will never arouse a sleeping world.

At two o'clock, I attended another of the pastors—a pleasing sermon, on the omniscience and omnipresence of God; nothing contrary to sound doctrine—rather agreeable to it. Thus far, then, have I gone in my sixteenth silent Sunday. My dear family arrived, as I hope, at Dijon from Lyon, last night; there I shall rejoice to meet them on Tuesday, that we may proceed on to Paris together, and return to dear, dear England.

*Sunday evening, 10 o'clock.*—I have spent a most delightful evening at one of the professors' of the University. We had family devotion.—During the course of it arrived a French Protestant minister, from the Cevennes Mountains, in the department of the Garde, remarkable as the retreat of the Protestants in the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, during the persecution of Louis XIV. Our host, when he had ended his own prayer, asked his new guest to pray, and then me; so that a minister of the Swiss, French, and English churches, prayed in succession. I trust it was truly in the spirit of what our creed calls, “The communion of saints.” We had then an hour and a half of most edifying conversation—quite delightful. The French minister complained loudly of the indiscretion of friends in England, in addressing, a few years ago, circular letters to the Protestant ministers of La Garde, to inquire whether they were persecuted, &c. The *Préfet* of his department was extremely angry, and asked, what the English would have said if French priests had sent circular letters to the Catholics of Ireland, with similar inquiries!

He told me a circumstance that is very interesting: at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, when Louis XIV persecuted the Protestants of the Cevennes with his *Dragonnades*, he pulled down their churches to build forts: and now within a few years, (since Bonaparte gave liberty to the Protestants) some of these forts have been destroyed, in return, to build churches. Surely a retributive Providence rules the world

and is at times visibly apparent; persecution, especially, seems to be visited and avenged by the righteous dispensations of the Most High. This French minister from the sequestered mountains of Cevennes charmed me—such piety, talent, vivacity, simplicity, joined with an original creative genius, that he quite arrested me. He has left that same sort of powerful impression on my mind, which my dear friends, the French minister at Franckfort, and M. Wytenbach at Bern, in different ways, did. But I must absolutely close—the coach starts at half-past four in the morning. Adieu.

*Monday morning, half-past four.*—At Geneva still, just going off for Dijon. Farewell Switzerland! Morning cold, dark, and miserable.

Yours affectionately,

D. W.

#### NOTICE ON THE RÈGLEMENT OF GENEVA.

This *Règlement* of the church of Geneva, which was issued in may 1817, and which prohibits the clergy from inculcating fully and explicitly the divinity of Christ, original sin, grace, and predestination, is one of the most afflictive circumstances which has occurred in any Protestant church since the reformation. The open persecution at Lausanne I have already ventured to notice with the indignation which I conceive it merits. There, however, the great articles of Christian truth are not directly attacked. The doctrine of the church remains untouched—the confession, the liturgy, the other formularies of the Reformation survive. The sword of intolerance is, indeed, absurdly and wickedly drawn against those who infringe on the ecclesiastical discipline of the canton. But the true faith may be preached without interruption within the pale of that establishment. No doctrines are there proscribed. But at Geneva, persecution is united with an open departure in the church itself, from the first principles of the Gospel; the very foundations of Christianity are dug up—the wells of salvation corrupted and poisoned.

A labored apology for the *Règlement* has been attempted by M. Simond, in his late acute and able work on Switzerland. He does not, indeed, scruple to regret that it was issued; but the main purport of his remarks is to show, that it was necessary to preserve the peace of the church, and that the ministers of Geneva have done right in not prolonging fruitless debates after fourteen centuries of contention.

This apology is exactly agreeable to the indifference as to religious opinions, which is so fashionable in the present day. But the real question is, whether any body of ministers have a right to alter, conceal, or check the full and fair development of the great truths of revelation, on the plea of preserving peace. Are not the doctrines of the deity and propitiation of the Son of God, of the lost and fallen condition of man, of the necessity of efficacious grace to the conversion of the heart from sin to holiness, and of the ascription of all we receive and hope for to the mercy of God, the very sum and substance of the Christian religion? And though the doctrine of the divine will in predestination be not a tenet equally funda-

mental, yet it is confessedly found in the Holy Scriptures, and is avowed and expounded in most of the Protestant confessions. The Seventeenth Article of the English church is expressly on this topic. As to the other three prohibited doctrines, I would ask, What is the great mystery of godliness, but “God manifest in the flesh?” What the great proclamation of the Gospel itself, but that “God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself?” What the great charge brought against the human race, but that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” that “by one man sin entered into the world,” that we “are all by nature children of wrath,” and that it is “God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure?” What is the main summary of the whole scheme of revelation, but that “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast; for ye are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them?” And what was the chief glory of the Reformation, but to have brought again these truths to light, and made them the subjects of public instruction?

It is true, disputes and controversies have, through the infirmity of man, arisen in various ages, on questions connected with these sublime mysteries. But are there not abundant remedies for such evils provided in the precepts and narratives of the New Testament, and especially in the Epistles of St. Paul? Was it ever imagined, that the remedy of such debates was the annihilation of the whole Gospel itself? Did St. Paul, on account of the dissensions at Corinth, cease to preach “Jesus Christ, and him crucified?” When the Galatians disputed so as even to “devour one another,” did he not the more solemnly inculcate the Gospel which he had first delivered? And with regard to peace in the particular church of Geneva, did not the *Règlement* of June 1, 1725, as M. Simond acknowledges, require the moderator to charge those who are admitted into the sacred ministry “not to treat in the pulpit of any curious and useless topics, which might disturb the peace of the church;” whilst he nevertheless engaged them to “maintain the doctrine of the holy apostles and prophets, as it is contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, of which doctrine they had a summary in their Catechism?” Why was this formula, which was stripped of its last clause in 1783, not restored, as the most natural and authoritative expedient for preserving peace?

M. Simond says, with a sort of triumph, that the ministers are only forbidden to preach on these four proscribed topics controversially. But were the excellent discourses of the Regent, in 1818, on the fall of the faithful, and on the faith which saves, controversial? Can any discourses be more simple, more practical, more solid, more affecting? Why then were the pulpits of Geneva closed against him? Or were the private instructions he gave the children of his class polemical, or contrary to the peace of the church? Why then was he dismissed arbitrarily from his office, and cast with his wife and children upon the wide world?



M. Simond draws an extravagant portrait of the sentiments which he is pleased to denominate methodistical, as maintained at Geneva. It is not my province to defend every particular sentiment or proceeding into which pious persons, under an unjust and intolerant inquisition, may have fallen. Nothing can be more unfair than to lay hold on the mistakes or infirmities of those who are the objects of persecution, as a palliation of such persecution itself. Supposing these errors to be tenfold greater than they have been alleged to be by their bitterest enemies, no reasonable man can doubt that the pious Regent above referred to, and the other students at Geneva, were silenced and deprived of their rights, not on account of those indiscretions, but because they held the doctrines of Farell, and Viret, and Calvin, and Beza, and all the Reformers on the fundamental tenets of the glorious Gospel; because they believed and professed the mystery of the eternal Trinity, the divinity and atonement of the Son of God, the fall and corruption of man, and his incapacity for any thing spiritually good without the operation of divine grace; and the ascription of salvation from first to last to the undeserved mercy of God in Christ Jesus—those mysteries within which all the truth, and holiness, and consolation of genuine Christianity lie, and which, when they are excluded, no single instance can be produced of any real progress made in Christian piety and virtue.

But M. Simond enumerates, with much complacency, the doctrines which the ministers of Geneva are still allowed to preach—the providence of God, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the necessity of a divine revelation, &c. &c.; and concludes by assuring us, that it is the *chef-d'œuvre* of theology to make revealed agree with natural religion—the very Deism this, colored over with Christianity, which marks the fatal fall which I am deploring in the church of Geneva. For what are these doctrines, if separated from the great sacrifice of an Incarnate Saviour, and the efficacious operations of the Eternal Spirit, but a mockery of man's misery? Where is pardon, where adoption, where peace of conscience, where regeneration and conversion, where holy love to a dying and glorified Saviour, where the influences of grace, where the springs of obedience and mortification of sin, which are all necessary in order to meet with comfort this awful resurrection and the judgment of the last day? Better, far better that the delusive peace of the Genevese church should be troubled, than that all the souls committed to its care should perish in ignorance of the life-giving truths of salvation. Indeed real peace in a church can be obtained by no such methods. The way to that great blessing is, by the humble, faithful preaching of the Gospel in all its fulness, as it was delivered to us by the apostles and evangelists, and re-asserted by the Reformers and Martyrs—then would a meek and docile temper be framed, and all the holy fruits of obedience cultivated, in those who received the grace of the Saviour; and thus peace would flourish and abound.

I speak the more warmly on this subject, because Geneva furnishes many of the Protestant churches in every part of Europe with young pas-

tors. The doctrines of her once celebrated university are preached at Paris and Lyon, at Brussels and Hamburgh, at London and St. Petersburg. Let us pray, then, that divine truth may again revive amongst her ministers, pastors, and professors. Voltaire and Rousseau have passed away. The mischievous and poisonous influence of their writings is rapidly diminishing. They live no longer to feed a prurient curiosity with a succession of impious and licentious productions. Let us hope, then, that sound learning and sound theology may gradually revive. Surely the pastors of Geneva must hear sometimes of the grief and consternation which fill Protestant Europe at their fall. Surely they must feel the cutting reproaches of Roman Catholics, and even of infidels, on their inconsistent and unmanly conduct as professors of the religion of Christ.\* Surely they must observe in the incipient dissenting bodies springing up in the bosom of their republic, and will probably increase till the true doctrine is again preached in the churches, that neither peace nor unity can be attained on their present plan. Surely that part at least of the ministers and students whose prejudices are less fixed, must see, in the daily accounts of the progress of religion in every part of the world by the name of the Lord Jesus, that there is a reality in the Gospel, a power, an efficacy from on high, which attends the humble preaching of the doctrines of grace, to which no other scheme of religion can pretend.

May the time be hastened, when Geneva, having “repented and done her first works,” shall again resume her rank amongst the Reformed churches, and become once more the favorite university of continental Europe! The small number of her pastors (about thirty or forty) may make a return comparatively easy. Already some favorable appearances present themselves. I had the pleasure of seeing myself several pastors who were imbued with the genuine love of a crucified Saviour, and I heard of others who still “hold the head.” In the meantime, let it be the care of those who are “suffering for righteousness’ sake” to walk circumspectly, to study the meek and passive character of the primitive Christians when under persecution, to imbibe the eminent spirit of wisdom and humility which adorned the Reformers of the Swiss churches, and which was more remarkable than even their fortitude or zeal; and, above all, to “take heed to the doctrine” which they preach, that it be “sound speech that cannot be condemned”—that they dwell chiefly on great and necessary truths—that they avoid matters of

\* M. Simond quotes Rousseau as saying, with much truth, “People ask the ministers of the church of Geneva, if Jesus Christ is God. They dare not reply. A philosopher casts a rapid look on them. He penetrates them, he sees them to be Arians, Socinians, Deists; he says this, with the idea of doing them honor. Immediately they assemble in alarm and terror, they discuss, they are agitated, they know not on what saint to call, and after a variety of consultations, deliberations, conferences, all ends in an equivocal in which they neither say yes nor no. O Genevese, your ministers are truly singular persons; people know not what they believe, nor what they do not believe! One knows not even what they pretend to believe; their only manner of establishing their faith is by attacking that of others.”

confessed difficulty or inferior moment, however scriptural, in their view, they may be—or that, at all events, they treat such points with the reserve which the Apostles constantly exhibit—and that thus they “show themselves to be workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”\*

## LETTER XVII.

*Poligny, Oct. 7, 1823.—Paris, Oct. 11, 1823.*

Nyon—Calvin and Fletcher—Catholic Lady—Conversation on Popery—Geneva—Prohibited Books—Auxonne—Irish Catholics—Dijon—Miraculous Image of Virgin—Palace of the Dukes of Burgundy—Bossuet—Wagons—Auxerre—Joigny—Cardinal de Reiz—Fontainebleau—Apartments of the Pope—Bonaparte's Abdication—Place of Madrid—Character of Bonaparte—Sens—St. Bernard—Manners of people—Catholics receiving Tracts—Arrival at Paris.

*DÔLE, Department of the Jura, 110 miles from Geneva, about 2,522 miles from London by my route, Tuesday morning, October 7, 1823.*

MY DEAREST SISTER—So far have I come in this tiresome diligence. We left Geneva at half-past four yesterday. The day soon broke out beautifully. We drove along the lake to Nyon, which I just named to you as I was first passing to Geneva six weeks back. It is an agreeable town, of eighteen hundred souls, supposed to be the Roman Novodunum, about eleven miles from Geneva. Marble urns, inscriptions, and other antiquities are still found in its neighborhood. It is endeared to Englishmen as having given birth to Fletcher of Madeley—a name connected with all that is pure and exalted in piety, and amiable and disinterested in benevolence; nothing, I think, in modern times has equalled the habitual spirituality of mind, the holy and ardent love, the utter abstraction from worldly things, the unaffected humility, the self-denying and tender compassion for souls, that distinguished this eminent minister. Had the great reformer of Geneva, two centuries previous, united the lovely and seraphic qualities of Fletcher, with his own prodigious grasp of intellect, the Reformation would have gained incalculably. The sweetness and devotion of the one, joined to the penetrating judgment and vast intellect of the other, would have formed a character of surpassing excellence.† But I have no time to enlarge.

\* I am happy, truly happy, to be able to say, from my last accounts from Switzerland, March, 1825, that the spirit of persecution appears to be much declining at Geneva—that the pious regent above referred to is allowed to preach and exercise his ministry in a separate meeting-house without molestation; and that some hope may be entertained of a gradual approximation once more to the truth of the Gospel, on the part of the ministers and inhabitants of the city and canton.

† Mr. Fletcher's name was properly Jean Guillaume de la Flechere. He was born at Nyon, Sep-

After passing Nyon, we ascended the Dôle mountain, the highest of the chain of the Jura; five thousand eight hundred and fifty feet—insufferably cold. We supped at St. Laurent; and, at half-past four this morning, we arrived at Poligny, having performed eighty-three miles in twenty-four hours, i. e. not quite three miles and a half in the hour. The road across the Jura was surrounded with rude, magnificent scenery, and in some places was sublime and beautiful. Snow lay scattered here and there, and on the summit pretty thickly. Posts are erected at short intervals, to mark its depth in the winter. One set of miserable horses drew us forty-four miles, three stages. The drivers managed this, by making them rest while we supped, and whilst our luggage was searched, which was only three times in nine hours! Dôle, where we are about to breakfast, is a town of eight thousand five hundred souls, on the river Doube, the Dubis of Cæsar, and formerly the capital of Franche-comté; in a tract which, from its fertility and beauty, has received the name of the *Val d'Amour*. It contains some ruins of a Roman amphitheatre and of two aqueducts.

I have two English gentlemen as my companions, who are very agreeable; and one Italian lady, who speaks good French. She talks fast on all sorts of subjects, and amongst other questions, asked me this morning, if I was a Catholic. This led to a long conversation. The point I insisted upon was, that the church of Rome had gradually lost the simple and scriptural meaning of each separate part of the Christian religion, and had substituted for it a gross external sense, just suited to the ignorance and corruption of the human heart. Thus, for the spiritual invisible church, it had substituted the outward church of Rome, and for Christ its head, the Pope; for feeding by faith on the body and blood of Christ, transubstantiation; for repentance, penance; for contrition and lowliness of heart, lacerations and pilgrimages; for confession of sins before God, auricular confession to a priest; for prayer to God from the heart, endless repetitions of paternosters; for reverence and honor to the Virgin Mary and the saints, religious and, in fact, idolatrous worship; for secret, holy love to the Saviour, images and crucifixes; for reliance on the satisfaction and atonement of Christ only, the sacrifice of the mass, prostrations, scourgings, lacerations, merits of saints, indulgences, purgatory, &c.; for the influence of the Holy Spirit, merit of congruity, a mere external and formal routine of ceremonies, man's unassisted efforts, incense, lights ever burning, &c.; and so of all the rest!

She confessed that in her heart she preferred the Protestant religion, as the most pure and unadorned; but that having been brought up a Catholic, she did not feel at liberty to change. I could make no impression on her. She said she had been once present at the Protestant service at Paris, and was charmed with the simplicity of

tember 12th, 1729; and died August 14th, 1785.—Calvin, whose name originally was Jean Chauvin, or Cauvin, was a native of Picardy, but spent the greater part of his life at the celebrated city of Geneva. He was born July 10, 1509, and died May 27, 1564.



the prayers; and, above all, with the clear and manly exposition of the Gospel given by the minister in his sermon. I found I could not supply what was wanting in her state of mind—a deep conviction of the value of her soul—a right sense of sin as committed against God—a holy dread of giving that honor to creatures, which the Almighty Jehovah claims for himself—and, above all, a living faith in the all-sufficient atonement of that divine Saviour, whose sacrifice is in effect made void by the superstitions and human merits of Popery. I thought it at last most advisable to urge her to read the New Testament, and to attend earnestly to the main essentials of religion, as she found them there enforced; repentance for sin, faith in the merits of our Saviour Christ, love to God and man, and obedience to the divine law, as flowing from these principles. This advice did not irritate her. She admitted the propriety of complying with it; and we continued excellent friends during the remainder of our journey.

The country, since we have descended the Jura, is tolerably pleasant, but not fine. The villages are rather miserable. The women wear wooden shoes without stockings. The lands are not well cultivated: there are vineyards occasionally.

As the breakfast is not ready, I may as well inform you that the ministers of Geneva (for I tell you things as they come to my recollection) have the unfavorable habit of perpetually changing duties with each other; a printed paper being published in the town every Saturday, with a list of the preachers for the week. Besides this, they have months of repose, alternately with months of preaching; the consequence, I conceive, must be, that the pastoral feelings must be weakened, as well as the habits of painful diligence which become the minister of Christ. But it is all of a piece. The religion of too many of the Genevese, and indeed of the Swiss generally, seems at present to have woefully degenerated from the dedication of the heart to God, and the pervading influence of Christian principles through the whole life, to a formal preparation for the first communion and attendance on the three or four annual festivals. Surely this is greatly to mistake the nature of true religion, and must bring down on them the marked displeasure of the Divine Head of the church, who “holds the stars in his right hand, and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.”—Rev. ii. 1.

There is, however, much sincere and simple devotion amongst many individuals at Geneva, notwithstanding the general state of the church. One lady, the mother of a large family, charmed me with her humble and yet ardent spirit of piety. It is said that her deeds of charity may be counted not merely by the days, but by the hours of her life. She maintains in the most admirable order two orphan schools almost at her own charge. Her love to her Saviour, her delight in prayer, her meekness, her humility and teachableness, her zeal in every good work, delighted me, even on the short acquaintance I had the opportunity of forming. I trust there are many, many such in every class of society, and that the number will increase; for I hope my remarks, though apparently severe, are consistent with the most genuine charity; I wish them to be so; sometimes I

half retract what I am writing, lest I should overstep the limits of that tenderness and love, which Christ our Lord enjoins, and which his Gospel breathes throughout. I can sincerely declare that the unfavorable reports I send you, are most reluctantly made.

Prohibited books are introduced into the continental states in a curious way: the title-page and contents of Blair's Sermons, for example, are printed and inserted for those of O'Meara's Bonaparte, and thus the fraud is concealed. A patriotic spirit is a good deal cherished amongst the youth; the students of all the different colleges and academies meet once a year, at a central spot in Switzerland, to encourage a love to their country; about six hundred are meeting this week at Zofingen.

*Dijon, capital of ancient Burgundy, eight o'clock, Tuesday night.*—Thank God, I am safely arrived, after a journey of one hundred and eighty-two miles from Geneva, performed in thirty-eight weary hours. I left Dôle at twelve, in another coach which met us from Besançon, and which consisted of three parts, a front chariot and two bodies of coaches, most awkwardly united and placed on the same wheels, (something like our double coaches in England,) and holding fifteen persons inside altogether. I was seated in the chariot, which they call *Le coupé*. We had five horses, and our pace improved so astonishingly, that we went five miles and a half the hour! We passed through a fortified town, named Auxonne, where Bonaparte is said to have studied in the school of artillery. I had a companion in the *coupé*, who was descended of Irish parents. He was a sensible, well-informed, communicative man, a Catholic. You may judge what was the subject of our discourse—the conduct of our government to the Irish Catholics. In fact, during the whole course of our tour, nothing has been so frequently objected to me as this topic. Whatever observations an Englishman makes on the laws or usages of the continental nations, the constant answer is, Look to your own treatment of the Catholics of Ireland. I replied to my companion as mildly as I could, vindicating our government very much on the ground of the violent prejudices and party-spirit which have prevented any fair judgment from being formed, and any impartial public measures being carried, on such an irritated question; at the same time observing to him that foreigners often had a very incorrect and inadequate notion of the real situation of the Irish Roman Catholics; and that in a free country like England, the government could adopt no general arrangements with respect to them, without the concurrence of parliament, and the support of public opinion. I told him I was myself far from joining in the indiscriminate hostility against all further change in the restrictive laws, which animated too many of my countrymen; but was, on the contrary, rather inclined to the opinion that additional civil privileges might be gradually granted the Catholics, in proportion as their loyalty and general good conduct should seem to entitle them to them. I added, that as a zealous Protestant, I conceived the more we could mix the Irish with the rest of the subjects of the British crown, and fairly increase their stake in the blessings of the British

constitution, the more we should loosen the bands of priestcraft, and separate them from their present guides. In reply, he assured me that it was his firm opinion that a conscientious Catholic might be a most loyal and faithful subject of a Protestant prince—the power of the Pope had for a long time been so purely spiritual, or rather ecclesiastical and formal—nothing, he thought, but a violent party-spirit could in any way make it dangerous. I give you the conversation exactly as it occurred. I am far from dogmatizing, as you know, on so complicated and difficult a point.—Popery I hate from the bottom of my heart. But the obvious ill effects of the system now acted upon in Ireland, and the anomalous, inconsistent state of the laws affecting the Catholics, together with the uniform practice of the continental governments, seem to advise the trial of new and more lenient proceedings.

I found my dearest Mrs. W. and my daughter here, pretty well. They arrived from Lyon on Saturday, at noon. The dear boys set off in one of the carriages, for Paris, on Monday morning, because the eldest is called to Oxford, by the commencement of the University term. Thus has it pleased God to preserve and bless us. We follow my sons to-morrow to Paris. Adieu.

*Maison Neuve, department of Cote d'Or, 43 miles from Dijon, on the Auxerre and Fontainebleau road to Paris, Wednesday evening, 7 o'clock, Oct. 8.*—Such is the place from which I date my letter to-night. We all retired to rest last evening, at Dijon, between eight and nine. I slept quite well till six, and then rose to visit the town of Dijon—the birth-place of Bossuet—before we set off. I first went to the church of St. Benigne, the spire of which has an elevation of three hundred and seventy feet. It is one of the most elegant I have ever seen; the spires of Coventry and Worcester are the only ones to which I can compare it. As I walked along, I happened to observe on all the churches an immense placard. I stopped from mere curiosity to see what it was. It was an advertisement of a new edition of the history of the miraculous image of Notre Dame at Dijon. I thought this quite piquant; I hurried to the church, and looked all around: a gaudy, embellished building, filled with altars, and pictures, and statues; but no image, that I could discover. I was determined not to be disappointed; and going out I met an elderly lady apparently approaching the church door, and inquired of her if that was the church of the miraculous image. She replied with a manifest feeling of pleasure, that it was; and immediately took me up to an altar in the church, on which was the statue of the Virgin, resembling that of a blackamoor, and decked out with tawdry ornaments.

I afterwards bought the book: positively it asserts the various miracles performed by this wretched figure. Nay, more, indulgences are granted to all who worship this image, and a society is formed to celebrate feasts to her honor. As the image is black, the author attempts to prove, very gravely, that the Virgin Mary was of a swarthy complexion, and applies to her the mystical words of the Canticles, "I am black, but comely." He supposes the image to be of the eleventh century. He affirms that it is not only

"the object of the confidence of the inhabitants of Dijon, but that all the province invokes it." This is the language he uses. The alleged miracles are, like all the Popish ones, more than dubious. For instance, the Swiss besieged Dijon in 1513—they were about to storm the city—the whole town betook itself to pray to the image of the Virgin—the enemies relented, and the siege was raised. In such an event, supposing it to be true, every one sees there is not even a pretence to that broad, direct, and palpable suspension of the powers of nature, open to the view of mankind, which distinguishes the miracles of the Gospel. I have brought the book with me to England.—What can one hope for, when such mummeries are obtruded upon France, in the nineteenth century, and after the attacks made by infidelity on our common Christianity?

Two-thirds of the churches of Dijon are shut up and used as storehouses and granaries. The place royale is in the form of a horse-shoe and contains the provincial palace and the ancient house of assembly of the parliament of Burgundy. The palace of the governor general of Burgundy is now occupied by a police office, museum, and library. One of the magnificent staircases is used as a bookseller's shop; the arcades are built up, and used as shops likewise. Such are the transformations which a few years make in the mansions of the great. Dijon was the seat of one of the ancient parliaments, and contains now twenty-two thousand souls. The Protestants are considered by some of the common people to be Jews, or rather, as I hope, confounded with them, just as they were at Dunkirk; for I cannot imagine any persons actually to believe the Protestants to be Jews.

But you will be anxious for me to come to the great Bossuet—I inquired of several persons where he lived; but was surprised to find no one knew any thing about him. At Lichfield every child would have pointed out to me the house where our great English moralist (Dr. Samuel Johnson) was born. At last I discovered the street which bears his name, Rue de Bossuet. It still took me some time to ascertain the spot of his birth. I went from house to house; not a creature could give me any information: with great difficulty I at length found the place, a bookseller's shop. The bookseller himself was hardly aware of the distinguished person who had formerly inhabited his dwelling. Two hundred years had, in fact, effaced almost all traces of this prodigious genius, except his small chapel. I entered it, and examined every part, not without veneration. The house itself has undergone so many alterations, as to contain only a few rooms of the original building. Bossuet is undoubtedly the first writer whom the French possess; but he is not one of my greatest favorites. I cannot divest my mind of his harsh treatment of the admirable Fénelon. His haughty domineering spirit, also, as he acquired weight in the councils of France, and the share which I cannot but think he took, notwithstanding the apologies of his biographer, Bausset, in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, have left an unfavorable impression on my mind as to his whole character.

But his sermons, which were not prepared for publication, and are the first effusions of his heart



in his early life, when his piety seems to have been really fervent and sincere, are admirable. They were published after his death. I prefer them to those of Massillon and Bourdaloue. There is quite as much of religious truth in them, with more of nature, force, energy, surprising thoughts, and an overpowering eloquence, negligent of exact form, and quite bearing away the mind of the reader. The finest trait in his conduct at court was his writing to his royal master when at the camp in Flanders, to remonstrate with him, in the most respectful but firm manner, on the scandal of his connexion with Madame de Montespan—and then his going out to meet the king when he was returning from the campaign, and alighting from his carriage, and placing himself in the midst of the road, by which his majesty was about to pass, in order to entreat and urge him to a change of conduct, and a conversion to God. This was noble, and as became a Christian bishop especially towards an imperious tyrant like Louis XIV.

But I must not enlarge. The city of Dijon is one of the finest in France: the streets are wide and open, and the buildings handsome. It stands on the river Ouche. I met a young Catholic student at a bookseller's. He seemed tolerably well informed. The university here is amongst the most celebrated in France. We left Dijon at half-past nine, and came to this village (Maison Neuve,) where, finding no horses, we have taken up our abode for the night. We have had beautiful weather, and good roads; but the horses and postillions are so indifferent, that we have been eight hours going forty-three miles.

We have met a great many wagons to-day of rather a curious construction. They are small carriages, on four wheels, without bodies; the merchandize being packed with straw, on two trunks of trees, which form the bottom of the wagon. The whole is covered with a wrapper of white clean cloth, and kept close with cords. One horse draws the carriage. A train of ten or twenty of them follow each other, and there is one man to about five. Goods are transported in this way all across France. The horse has an enormous collar, and a cloth over the harness. We met numbers of these wagons in many parts of Switzerland. Sometimes the pole of them rises many feet above the horse's head, in the most awkward way imaginable, and then it has two chains joining it to the harness of the animal. In fact, so far as I can judge, France is, in most respects, much behind our happy country. You see scarcely any fields, barns, and farm-houses, in this part of the Côte d'Or—all is one common. The country through which we have passed to day has been far from fine—but I must prepare for retiring to rest; it is past eight o'clock. The dear boys, I hope, arrived at Paris this afternoon; we are about one hundred and seventy-five miles off. We hope to sleep to-morrow night at Joigny, Friday at Fontainebleau, and Saturday at Paris.

*Joigny, Thursday evening, half-past six.*—Through God's goodness we have arrived safely in this town, after a journey of seventy-seven English miles. The chief things which have pleased us to-day are Avallon and Auxerre. Avallon is a romantic town on the river Cousin; the

celebrated Theodore Beza is said to have been born in the neighborhood. We stopped to take some refreshment, and in the *salle-à-manger* found a priest who was eating a solitary meal. He seemed depressed and abject, his attire was mean, and his whole appearance opposite to the general air of the priests whom we saw at Domo D'Osola and Milan. France and Italy are clearly two different places as it respects ecclesiastical domination.

Auxerre is one of the most beautifully situated cities which I have seen since I left England. It is the chief town of the department of the Yonne, and stands on the river of that name; it has twelve thousand souls. A gentle hill gives the place a lovely appearance from a distance. As you approach, the view is remarkably fine. The foreground is covered with vineyards; then the river presents itself; above is the town, on the rising ground, crowned with fertile hills and meadows. The sides are bounded by trees and pastures on the one hand, and the fine bridge leading to the town on the other. Whilst we were changing horses, I ran up with my little Eliza to see the cathedral, which is a noble, lofty structure. We have been passing to-day through some of the finest vineyards of this part of France. The vintage is not yet begun. The *vin ordinaire*, included in the dinners, is now excellent.

*Friday evening, October 10, half-past six, Fontainebleau, department of Seine and Marne, forty miles from Paris.*—Again a day of goodness and mercy from our Heavenly Father. My dear Ann and Eliza are now sitting by me happy and comfortable, after the hasty dinner of which we have just partaken. They are not over-fatigued. I seem now to be at home; we are so near to Paris. We have come sixty-one miles to-day from Joigny; and our road and horses have been so good, that we were somewhat less than nine hours upon the route.

This morning I rose soon after five, and was out by six visiting the town of Joigny. I was not aware of it; but really we have advanced so far into the autumn, that I could hardly see my way about. The evenings seem yet more drawn in. At half-past six yesterday, when we arrived at Joigny, it was rather later and darker than we could have wished. Joigny is a small town, in Champagne, of five thousand souls, beautifully situated on the Yonne. It has a long handsome quay along the river. The culture of the vine is the principal object of trade. The chief part of the town is, like Auxerre, on the ascent of a steep hill; on the summit of which stands a ruined chateau, built by Père de Gondi, father of the too celebrated Cardinal de Rentz. I walked through the dilapidated rooms, half-enlightened by the obscure dawn, with a feeling of melancholy on considering the vanity of human grandeur. How many instances have we seen of the monuments of proud ambition and magnificent vice all laid in ruin! Moral triumphs and the praises of real and exalted virtue are, after all, the only ones that are enduring, even in this world. The ambitious conqueror, the demagogue, the leader of factions, the heresiarch, sink into neglect with the glare of prosperity—their palaces fade with their fame. The flower of the field drops not so quickly. But

the true benefactors of mankind live in the memories of men; their praise takes root, and spreads around and flourishes in perpetual bloom; and if truly Christian principles have guided their conduct, the love of their fellow-creatures is crowned by the favor and approbation of God.

But the most striking lesson I have received on this subject is in the superb château of Fontainebleau, where we now are. As soon as we arrived here (at four this afternoon,) I went to visit this celebrated palace. All Europe is familiar with it by name; it is an immense mass of buildings, containing five squares or courts; almost like a town. It is mentioned in history as a royal palace ever since the thirteenth century; but it is indebted for its chief extension and improvement to Francis I. It was a favorite residence of Francis I. Henry IV. Louis XIV. and Bonaparte, just the four persons most celebrated in French history. There is a spot where Henry IV. is said to have held his secret councils. The Pope, who is just dead, was imprisoned here by Bonaparte for a year and a half. The conscientious resistance which he made to the demands of the usurper, cast a splendor around his character. We walked through the suite of apartments, and saw his library, chapel, saloon, &c. The altar of the room which he used as his chapel is now set aside and marked by an inscription. The count d'Artois (now king) makes use of the same rooms, and had left them only the day before yesterday: he comes to hunt in the forest, of thirty-four thousand acres (twelve leagues,) surrounding the château.

But I hasten to mention, what was the most affecting circumstance, that I saw the very table on which Bonaparte signed his abdication, April, 1814, in the very room where he sat, and adjoining the very bed-room in which he slept. Fontainebleau was his favorite palace. Now all his pictures are removed, and every trace of him effaced—what a lesson! I was struck with a large model of the city of Madrid placed in the ball-room, which Bonaparte ordered to be begun in 1802, and which took the architect six years to finish. The very source of his overthrow seems to have been a darling object, years before his first invasion of Spain in 1808!

History will soon sit in judgment on this extraordinary man. His skepticism as to all religious truth, his unbounded ambition, the fury of his passions, his waste of human life and happiness in the prosecution of his projects, the injustice and treachery of his invasions, the iron yoke which he imposed on the subject nations, his unmitigated hatred of England, his many individual acts of cruelty and blood, are points now generally admitted. But it is impossible to travel on the continent without being compelled to witness the proofs of his admirable policy, and of his zeal to promote, in many respects, the welfare and intellectual advancement of the people over whom he reigned. Not to dwell on the liberty of public worship which he nobly granted, from whatever motive, to the Protestants of every confession: there is something so splendid in his national works, there are so many monuments of his legislative wisdom, so many traits of grandeur in his projects, and such a hardihood and perseverance

manifest in all his great enterprises, that you do not wonder that his name is still everywhere revered. Then the diversity and extent of his knowledge, and the unbounded range of the objects of his attention, increase one's surprise. War, commerce, the arts, science, literature, the adorning of cities and towns, the education of youth, religion itself as an instrument of government, every thing seemed to be within his grasp, or to subserve his ruling purposes. He brought, in fact, royalty and talent into such close contact, that there was some danger of men beginning to estimate the value of a sceptre by the mere ability of the hand that wielded it.

The unfavorable tendency of this seductive union of splendid vice and successful ambition, on the public morals and the religious habits of Europe, is obvious—it debases the best principles of the heart. Of Bonaparte, as an unconscious instrument of Divine Providence for scourging guilty nations, for shaking the papacy to its base, and arousing those dormant energies in the mass of the population of Europe, which may probably issue in the general diffusion of a reasonable liberty, and of all the blessings of the glorious Gospel of Christ, I will not trust myself to speak. This view, though correct perhaps, has been too exclusively taken already by religious persons. They have allowed their horror of individual crime, and even their sense of personal responsibility to be lessened, by mingling this question with the supposed purposes of the divine Providence—a mistake infinitely pernicious. A humble reference, indeed, of every event after it has occurred and the issue is known, to the sovereign and mysterious government of God, is a clearly Scriptural duty; but to applaud or extenuate the guilt of man, and help on a course of criminal ambition, on the ground of its conceived agreement with the order of prophecy and the secret will of God, is a presumptuous and fatal error. But I check myself.

The country through which we have passed to-day has been tolerably fine; but as we are now travelling north, just at the turn of the year, we feel excessively cold. As we passed through Sens, we looked up with interest to the cathedral where the pious and devotional Bernard, the last of the fathers of the church, refuted, in 1140, the doctrines of Abelard. This celebrated heretic, you may remember, had challenged St. Bernard to the conference. The saint went to it in Christian meekness and fear. As soon as the extracts from Abelard's writings had been read before the audience (where the king of France, Louis VII. was present, with his nobles, and the prelates and clergy of the diocese,) Abelard was overwhelmed with confusion, at being thus confronted with his own writings, and suddenly left the assembly. His errors were then unanimously condemned. There is something gratifying in visiting the spot where seven centuries before, the name and grace of our Lord Jesus were thus triumphant. Many similar cases are recorded of the daring leaders of heresies being confused and struck dumb, as it were, at the simple exposition of their own tenets, in the presence of the holy and humble disciples of Christ, armed with the sacred Scriptures only.



We have now passed through about sixty miles of vineyards. The vines are short, planted in rows, and supported by sticks; not by treillises and arbors as in Italy. As the vintage is approaching, persons are set to guard the grapes. They are chiefly red in this part of the country. The costume of the women is not remarkable: no bonnets are worn on any part of the continent, except by the higher classes. The female peasants here wear a colored handkerchief wrapped round the head in the form of a turban, often of a red or scarlet color. The men affect a dirty, shabby, finery; a beggar comes up to you with a military cocked hat; a stable-boy has a pigtail, and perhaps powdered hair, ear-rings, and generally a dirty night-cap; the boots of the postillions are of enormous and lumbering size; some today were ribbed with iron, and actually made the feet of the poor rider swing about, instead of his being able to guide them; then an undressed sheep's-skin with all its wool, enveloping the knees, is a further addition to his burden.

The agriculture still appears wretched. Almost all one common land. A horse, a mule, an ass, draw the same plough, which a woman drives, whilst a man guides the ploughshare. On the roads, too, you meet a wagon heavily laden, with four large fine horses like ours in England, and then an ass in front, leader of the train; and this ass, a mean, half-starved creature. The fact is, the proprietors bring out every animal they possess of every species, when they have goods to transport from place to place. The number of beggars is shocking; their diseased, distorted appearance is often such, that I am obliged to give them something before we can get out of the carriage. The dirt, untidiness, misery, in the private habits of the innkeepers and ordinary inhabitants of the continent, German, Swiss, Italian, French, are not to be described on paper: one cannot account for it: if you go into their rooms, their kitchens, their pantries, you are quite disgusted with the ill savor. The interior of the abodes of the nobility and gentry is often neat and elegant, and I have been in private houses quite as comfortable as any in England; and generally, perhaps, things are gradually more and more arranged on the plan of English cleanliness and simplicity. But I speak of the inns and houses we meet with in travelling.

To many of these inconveniences, however, one soon becomes accustomed; others are avoided in the better lodgings and inns; the rest you submit to from dire necessity. The freedom of the manners of the people, and their notions of equality with you, at first seem repulsive, but afterwards appear so clearly to spring from mere simplicity, that you forgive it. I am happy to say, that I have found the Catholic peasants willing enough to receive our religious tracts; and that when I talk with them, they admit what I say on the foundations of Christianity.\* You may judge

\* As we were changing horses at a village on our way to Boulogne, Oct. 29, the carriage was, in three minutes, literally surrounded with villagers, who had heard we had tracts. At least thirty or forty of the separate homilies in French, of the Prayer-Book and Homily Society, are now diligently read, as I trust, by these poor people. Some of them asked

from this interminable letter at so late an hour, that I am not over-fatigued with my journey. Adieu.

*Paris, Hotel de Bristol, Place Vendome, half-past two, Saturday, Oct. 11, about 2772 miles from London by our route.\*—*Through God's goodness we are safe at Paris. We arrived here at half-past one o'clock. We left Fontainebleau a little before eight, and performed the journey of forty miles in less than six hours. The day has been rather wet; but as we approached Paris it cleared up, and we had a fine view of that noble city as we drove through it. We are at the Place Vendôme, a charming situation, close to the gardens of the Thuilleries. We found our dear boys, and my brother who is here, quite well. My son will bring this letter with him, which will most probably close this series of journal-like epistles, which I had no idea would ever have extended to such a length. If they have gratified my dear and excellent aged mother and yourself, in any degree proportioned to the interest I have gradually felt in writing them, I shall most truly rejoice. Whatever can lessen the pain of separation to a parent so dear to me, affords me a double pleasure. May it please God, to permit me to rejoin you in England in peace, and to retain the recollection of the many important lessons I have learned during my tour, together with that sense of gratitude which the uninterrupted blessings I have received during the course of it, should so deeply impress upon my heart.

I am your affectionate

D. W.

#### LETTER XVIII.

*Brighton, April 14, 1824.*

Paris Bible Society—Deaf and Dumb Institution—French Preachers—King's Almoner—Nobleman—Translation of Scott—Friends to whom Author was introduced—Baron de Sacy—Count D'Hauterive—Marquis de Jaucourt—Reflections on the whole Tour: 1st, Supreme Providence of God—2d, Opposite Evils of Superstition and Infidelity—3d, Scenes of Reformers' laborers—Luther—Beza—Bucer—Ecolampadius—Bullinger—Authenticity of 1 John v. 7, 8—4th, Duty of advancing the Age of Charity—5th, Importance of every traveller being active—Advice to Invalids—Anecdotes—6th, Gratitude to God—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—Origin of Vaudois—Expulsion from Valleys—Return—Need of Aid—7th, Prayer for Grace of Holy Spirit.

*BRIGHTON, Sussex, April 14, 1824.*

MY DEAREST SISTER—I at length begin the letter which you were so anxious I should have

Mrs. W. if the tracts were good for Catholics: she replied, they were particularly suited for them. The scene was really quite affecting. I forget the name of the village. It was not far from Paris. The swiftness with which the news of our having tracts spread from the persons to whom we first gave them, was surprising.

\* The direct route from London to Paris is about 300 miles.

written to you from Paris. I was so hurried during my stay in that city, that it was impossible for me to do it; and, indeed, I may perhaps attempt it with greater advantage now, because the interval of a few months will enable me to add some general reflections upon my tour on the continent, and to supply an incident or two of which I omitted to inform you at the proper moment.

Of Paris itself I need not say much; every one knows something of the splendor of its public buildings, and of its various attractions, in point of art and taste, to travellers of every description. I was naturally most interested by its moral and religious state. But I have no intention of entering at large even on this topic. A stranger has out slight opportunities of forming a correct judgment; and Paris is too important a place, and too near England, for me to venture a hasty opinion.

I know, however, that you will expect me to notice a few particulars. In the first place, then, I was gratified, and even affected, at attending the committees of the Paris Protestant Bible Society. I could not but reflect on the efforts made in the very same spot by the enemies, or rather conspirators against Christianity, under Voltaire and D'Alembert, during the preceding century. These, aided by the extraordinary profusion and folly of the French court, by the derangement of the national finances, and the corruption of general morals, paved the way for the horrors of the revolution and the military sway of Bonaparte. The zeal and superstition of the degenerate ecclesiastics, so far from preventing, joined in hastening the overthrow. Surely, then, the peaceful and holy distribution of THE BOOK, in the city where it had been so long despised, is a real triumph of Christianity, and the best omen of future blessings. About 50,000 copies of the Scriptures have been issued by means of the Paris Bible Society in the last four years—about two or three hundred auxiliary institutions and associations have been established in different parts of France—and a general revival of religion seems to be beginning. The vivacity of the French character, if once directed and sanctified by a principle of pure religion, is capable of the greatest and most beneficial efforts. It is lamentable to think that the Catholics frown on this society, and that the government is contracting its privileges, and even refusing it the liberty of holding its annual assemblies, wherever it dares. The present French ministry seem to desire nothing more than to be able to suppress this and all similar undertakings. Such, however, is the spirit of Popery almost everywhere.

I must next give you some account of the celebrated institution for the relief and instruction of the deaf and dumb, which is really one of the most interesting things in Paris. I took all the pains I was able, to be present at a lesson at the late Abbé Sicard's schools: but I was unsuccessful. I can, however, fully make up to you for this disappointment, by the kind communication of an excellent friend who visited it only the year before, and from whose notes, taken at the time, I select the following. There are about eighty children. They are taught gradually to associate with the objects of sight, certain signs by drawing and writing. The quickness and acuteness of the chil-

dren are so surprising, that their ideas on most subjects soon become accurate and clear. The following is the prayer used before lesson:

"O come, most Holy Spirit, and cause a ray of thy light to shine upon us! Come, Father of the poor! Come, source of grace! Come, light of the soul! O God, who has taught the hearts of thy faithful people by the light of thy Holy Spirit, grant us that Holy Spirit, which may dispose us to choose and love what is right, and may shed abroad in us its consolation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The prayer after lesson is equally beautiful. "O Lord, we entreat Thee to inspire all our actions by thy Holy Spirit, and to conduct them by the continual assistance of thy grace: so that all our prayers and all our works may proceed from Thee as their author, and refer to Thee as their only end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Surely such prayers are the genuine dictates of pure Christianity, and testify the deep piety of many of our Catholic brethren. My heart rejoices to recognize such sentiments, and honors those who entertain them.

The children rise slowly and gradually from the simplest to the most abstract and complex ideas, as their age and abilities permit; and are divided into several classes accordingly. At the lesson at which my friend was present, a gentleman wished to ask one of the upper classes, What love was? The master told him first to make the sign for interrogation, by holding up the fore-finger, and then to press his hand strongly upon his heart. This was understood, and several boys wrote the word love. On being told to define it, one wrote, (for they neither speak nor hear, as you will take care to bear in mind,) "Love is a sentiment of the mind, by which we incline to what appears to us good, useful, beautiful; it is the approbation of some object that pleases us." Another wrote, "There are many sorts of love; first, the love of God, which is the highest of all; then the love of men, the love of friends."

They next were asked, What was the difference between expectation, hope, desire, and enjoyment? A lad about fifteen wrote, "Expectation is like the branches of the apple-tree; desire is like the leaves; hope is like the blossom; and enjoyment is like the fruit."

After this they were asked, What is time? One replied, "A succession of moments, a point of eternity, a measure of eternity." What is eternity? "A day without morning or evening, a mysterious duration which finite beings can neither define nor comprehend."

The following question was then proposed, Is speech the gift of God or the invention of men? "Speech that is the language of men, is the gift of God; but that of the deaf and dumb is only a human invention."

On the direct subject of religion, they were asked, Whose existence comprehends all time? Massieu, an elderly man, who has been twenty years in the institution, and is lately gone to conduct a school at Bordeaux,\* wrote in answer,

\* This extraordinary man, when he was asked at another lesson, Whether God reasons? wrote in reply, "Reasoning is a process in order to find out



"God; God is the creator of the earth and of heaven, and of all that they contain. He is the Lord of all things, the Author of nature, the Governor of the universe." Who is Christ? "It is He who is the new Adam; He was made man by a miracle, for our salvation; He is the bruiser of the serpent's head, the repairer of the human race, and He knows even our most secret thoughts." What is faith? "Faith is a supernatural light, leading the soul to believe what it may not fully comprehend." What is conscience? "It is the voice of truth." Have all men power to do their duty? "Yes, with grace and good habits." Is man more inclined to good than evil? "Man needs the grace of God to keep him from evil; by evil passions men deprive themselves of the grace of God; passions are above human power." From whence comes grace? "In my opinion, it flows from the infinite and unmeasurable goodness of a merciful God." May all men have grace? "Yes, by means of frequent prayer." Was the revelation necessary to man? "Yes, I believe it was, and it contains all that is necessary to salvation."

There is to me something inexpressibly delightful in these scriptural, enlightened, and judicious replies, made not only by Catholics, but by Catholic children who are deaf and dumb.

The present master is M. Paulmier, who takes a parental interest in the children. He had been chief assistant to the Abbé Sicard for nineteen years. The boys are taught some art, trade, or learned profession, as their genius or choice seem to direct. There is a class who copy busts, draw heads, &c.; and another where boxes and measuring-rules, &c. are made. They all appeared as happy as they were intelligent. Really humanity and religion triumph at such a benevolent institution. One may exclaim, in a qualified sense, considering God as the first author of every such blessing, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." And this pleasure is heightened by the pure principles of morals and religion which seem to form the basis of their education. No Protestant could have given much more simple elementary instruction in the Christian faith, than these children have received. It is most painful to add, that the bishop of Hermopolis, since he has been placed at the head of education in France, is said to discourage even this incomparable school, and that M. Paulmier is removed, or about to be removed, from his situation. Thus the best institutions connected with the Roman Catholic church, are not fostered and encouraged by the leading authorities, as the seeds of future improvement, but opposed and rejected, as disturbing the repose, and contrary to the interests and tendencies of the dominant religion.

You will, perhaps, next wish me to say something about the French preachers. I was grieved to find, that there were only three public services\*

truth; but God knows all truth; therefore, I should think, God does not reason." The same person defined gratitude to be the memory of the heart; hope, the fire of love; and difficulty, possibility with obstacle.

\* May I not add, that, considering the numerous English who are resident in Paris, it would be be-

on the Sunday at Paris, for a population of nearly 30,000 Protestants of the two confessions; and these services so arranged as not to allow the same persons to attend conveniently at more than one. But this is not all: in the sermons which I heard, I wanted more of the sound, orthodox, Scriptural divinity of the old French Protestant school, who reared its early churches, and nourished the first Hugonots in the faith of the Gospel, and became an example and guide to reformed Europe. I wanted more of the close reasoning and manly appeals of CLAUDE, the author, as you may know, of the *Treatise on the Composition of a Sermon*, and of the *Defence of the Reformation*, and the worthy antagonist of Bossuet at the celebrated conference in 1682. I wanted more of the force and vigorous address of DUBOSC, in his able and most evangelical work on the epistle to the Ephesians—of whom Louis XIV. said, that he was the first speaker in France. I wanted more of the piety and unction of DRELINCOURT, whose book against the fear of death is current in England, and is indeed in almost every one's hands.

I was moreover much distressed to observe, that in the use of the liturgical prayers (which are at best, as I have already told you, extremely brief) the most evangelical parts were actually left out by some of the ministers. For instance, in the confession of sin, which at Bern and Lausanne was read entire, the deeper expressions of original corruption and guilt were several times omitted at Paris. So also in the longer prayer after sermon, the best parts were not read.—Thank God for the *FIXED Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies of the church of England*. The Lutheran church at Paris I was not able to attend; my observations regard the Reformed only.

I must say, however, in fairness, that the discourses at the Protestant churches were incomparably superior to a most florid and unsatisfactory charity sermon which I heard on a week-day from the king's almoner, at the chapel of a benevolent asylum for aged and destitute persons of family. I never shall forget the scene that day: nearly all the French court was present. The Duchesses of Angoulême and Berry, the Pope's Legate, the Archbishop of Paris, the public ministers of state, among whom I noticed M. Chateaubriand; ladies of quality without end; two of whom, splendidly attired, received the collection, as we went out, in velvet bags. I was most courteously received at the chapel by a French nobleman, who entered into a pretty long conversation with me on the state of England and France. I was of course very inadequate to give him a just account of many things which he inquired about, in a political point of view. He seemed to have a high admiration of the sentiments and conduct of our beloved monarch since his accession to the throne. He classed together the French Liberaux and the English Radicals. But to come to

coming the wealth and piety of our nation to build an English church there? There are several French churches in London.

Since the above note was written, I am informed that an English service has been instituted in the *Salon* of a clergyman resident at Paris, the Rev. Lewis Way, with a liberality and dignity which mark all the proceedings of that excellent person.

the sermon—such a vain tirade of compliment and extravagant attempt at eloquence, I never heard—without one genuine emotion, one affecting sentiment, one address to the heart—a fine voice and pure enunciation were every thing—the only idea I will quote from the discourse is, “Charity makes those who exercise it *as gods!*” O, where are the Bossuets, the Bourdaloues, the Massillons, or even the De la Rues, and Terrassons of the French church? I understand that M. Frayssinous, the present Bishop of Hermopolis, gave, some years back, most interesting lectures to the young on the Evidences of Christianity. Now even this kind of instruction is wanting. I could hear of no one energetic and able Catholic preacher, who took the ground of our common Christianity, and commended the Gospel to the conscience and good sense of mankind. Infidelity or superstition reign supreme. True religion is met with indifference or ridicule.

But I turn to another topic. I must not omit to tell you, that I spent a large part of my time at Paris in arranging the translation of Scott’s Comment on the Scriptures. I found a competent and pious minister, to whom I promised aid for preparing an accurate text of the Gospel itself, verifying the references, revising the translation for the last time, correcting the proofs, and carrying St. Matthew through the press. I formed also a committee for settling terms with the printer, drawing up a prospectus, and inspecting the due circulation of the work. I found that I should be obliged to advance all the expenses for printing St. Matthew; and it was agreed upon, to send round this Gospel pretty freely to the chief Protestant ministers of the continent, gratis, with the terms of subscription for the continuance of the work; and to be guided by the success of such subscriptions, as to the further translation of the Comment or not. Since my return home, the revision and preparation for the press have been unremittingly carried on, and the conditions with the printer and paper-maker nearly settled. Some months must, however, elapse before the Gospel can be published. A literary undertaking of such importance is continually impeded by unexpected difficulties. It is not like the translation of a temporary pamphlet—every thing demands the utmost care—not only is a thorough knowledge required of the language *from* which, and of that *into* which, the translation is to be made: but an acquaintance with theology in all its branches, an aptitude at discovering suitable idioms, a faculty of expressing new and foreign ideas, a readiness to imitate the style and manner of the original writer, and the talent of giving an interest and life to the whole style of the translation.\* The translation of Milner’s History is, I

\* It is now nearly three years since the above was written, and the gospel of St. Matthew is not yet published. The fact is, that after the first imperfect sketch of a translation had been revised and completed, M. F. Monod fils, who had undertaken to superintend the work at Paris, was seized with illness, and a twelvemonth elapsed before he was able to resume his exertions. In May 1826 however the first sheet was printed off, and the Gospel has been regularly proceeding ever since. The work however is still slow in its progress, because the correc-

hope, going on at Brussels.—I forwarded a copy of the original work immediately upon my return home. I consider this undertaking only second in importance to that of Scott.

I cannot quit the subject of Paris without mentioning the pleasure which I derived from becoming acquainted, however slightly, with some persons who are its distinguished ornaments. I place first amongst these the Baron de Sacy, almost the last of the distinguished Jansenist body, and perhaps the most accomplished oriental scholar in Europe; and the Count de Hauterive of the Foreign Department, whose knowledge of political economy is so highly, and I believe justly esteemed; he was an élève of the Duc de Choiseul, and knew, as he easily might, the history of our own country better than myself; for the minute particulars of history soon fade from the memory.—He, as well as M. de Sacy, are warm friends of the Bible Society. M. de Hauterive conversed with me much on subjects connected with religion. I was struck with the warmth with which he condemned our conduct towards the Irish Catholics, and at the admiration he expressed of the religious spirit of the English nation. He professed a high respect for our National Protestant church, on account of our tolerant principles and our regard to ecclesiastical order. Amongst a variety of other questions, he asked me why so eager a dispute should have arisen between the Catholics and Protestants about the Eucharist: for, added he, do you not believe that our Saviour is really, though invisibly, present in it? I replied, Yes. And do you not hold, he continued, that it is by faith this is discerned, and the benefits of it received? Certainly, was my answer. And we believe, he rejoined quickly, nothing more than this. Upon this I told him, that if the Catholic Doctors had been half as moderate upon this subject, and had only abstained from the adoration of the host, and other usages which Protestants deem superstitious and idolatrous, the separation on this topic would not have been so wide between the two churches as it is.\*

I may mention, also, that I made the acquaintance of the amiable Catholic Bishop Grégoire, a truly liberal and respectable prelate, both as it regards his sentiments and conduct. He seems to spend his life in attempting to lessen the differences and heal the dissensions between Catholics and Protestants, and in promoting the interests of religion and humanity. He is a warm advocate

tion of the translation is found to be extremely laborious—each sheet costing twelve or sometimes eighteen hours of close application. Half the Gospel, or about fifteen sheets (120 pages) are now finished.

\* I just insert here the article of the Creed of Pope Pius IV. on this point, to show the actual errors of the Roman Catholic church, so different from the charitable construction of individual laymen, however distinguished or well-informed. “I profess, that in the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, there is really and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the Catholic church calls transubstantiation.”



for the abolition of the slave-trade. I cannot omit the name also of the Marquis de Jaucourt, a Protestant nobleman, and a direct descendant from the celebrated Philip de Mornay, the great Protestant friend and counsellor of Henry the Fourth, and the man who openly protested against that monarch's abjuration of the Reformed religion, and who during a long life invariably maintained and defended the evangelical doctrine, in the faith of which he died with holy triumph. He ranks, perhaps, next to Coligny and Sully. The Marquis de Jaucourt, with a peculiar propriety, is president of the Paris Bible Society. The Baron de Staëli I was so unfortunate as not to find in Paris. I had the pleasure however of meeting him in London upon my return home. I do not enumerate other distinguished persons—my old friends Kieffer, Stapffer, &c. Nor should I have mentioned so many as I have, except with the design of recording my affectionate gratitude to some of the many leading personages who honored me with their esteem. The names I have given you include some of the best men in France, and those on whom the hope of great future good rests.

I have found far more to say concerning Paris than I expected; but I must quit the subject, that I may proceed to supply a few incidents, and make some general reflections as it respects the whole of my long journey.

1. Perhaps the strongest impression which has been left upon my mind, is of THE UNFATHOMABLE WISDOM OF GOD IN HIS PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE AFFAIRS OF MEN. I could not but observe continually his exuberant goodness, on the one hand, in the frame and order of the creation; and his inscrutable judgments, on the other, in the infliction of great and overwhelming calamities. These truths strike one less forcibly at home; but they revive in their full energy in foreign lands, where all is new, and curiosity never slumbers. In passing through different regions, and observing their widely, varying habits, usages, laws, constitutions, governments, and religious advantages—in retracing the chief changes and revolutions which in different ages have marked the history of each country—in contemplating the consequences of remote and, at first, trifling causes—in calling to mind the wonderful deliverances afforded in times of danger, and the present political, moral, and religious state, in which so many events have ended—the mind is led to adore that mysterious PROVIDENCE, which, unseen, guides and directs all the events of this lower world, and overrules even the passions of men to accomplish its own purposes. As we travel from place to place, history is localized, as it were, to the mind. Our contracted views become insensibly enlarged, and we acquire a firmer faith in the unfailing goodness of God towards those who fear him.

And surely, these feelings are aided by the contemplation of the sublime and grand features of the Divine MAJESTY which we trace in His works of creation—the profuse bounty scattered at every footstep—the loveliness, the variety, the simplicity, and the magnificence, which continually burst upon us. I can truly say, the chief natural wonders in our tour along the Rhine and through Switzerland have scarcely ever been absent from my mind since I first witnessed them.

Nor are the traces of God's wrath less awakening. I think I never was more affected than in hearing the tragic story of Goldau and the Dranse—in riding over the remains of whole villages, and reflecting that under the very feet of my mule lay the bodies of my fellow-creatures, brushed by an instantaneous ruin.

And here I am reminded of a still more awful destruction which occurred near the Grisons about two centuries ago, and which I ought to have mentioned in a former letter. The town of Piuri or Pleurs, two or three miles from Chavennes, was totally overwhelmed in 1618. On the 4th September of that year an inhabitant came in haste and urged the people to escape without delay, for he had seen the adjoining Alp actually cleaving asunder. His warning, for some reason which does not appear, was neglected. The same evening, an immense fragment of the mountain fell in a moment, and buried the whole town, so that not a soul escaped except three persons who were absent, and the individual who had given the alarm; even the daughter of this last person, returning for an instant to lock up the door of a cabinet, was buried with the rest. Two thousand four hundred and thirty persons perished, and the channel of the river was so filled, that the first tidings which the inhabitants of Chavennes received of the calamity, was by the falling of their river. I mention this case the rather, because the town was given up to voluptuousness and vice—filled with mansions and palaces,—the favorite summer resort of the most wealthy persons in Italy. The Protestant minister there had often warned the people of the terrible consequences of their sins, and of the judgment of God, which he believed would suddenly break out upon them.

Similar, though less extensive, calamities are perpetually occurring in Switzerland, and add exceedingly to the impression which a stranger receives from a journey through that wonderful country. He will be cautious indeed of presuming to interpret the Divine judgments in particular instances: but he will not fail to derive from them the solemn and general instruction inculcated by our Saviour; "Think ye that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, were sinners above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—Luke xiii. 4, 5.

2. I pass on to make a second reflection on THE LAMENTABLE, THOUGH OPPOSITE, EVILS OF SUPERSTITION AND INDIFFERENCE, which met us every where on our tour. It quite astonished me, in passing through the Netherlands, to witness, for the first time, the multiplied and unscripural pomp and idolatry of the church of Rome. The surprise was lessened, but not the grief and shame, as I prosecuted my tour. One would think it incredible, that men professing to believe in the New Testament should venture to impose such burdens, or that the people should submit to them. The various and open invasions which Popery has made in all ages on the liberties and peace of mankind, are recorded in every history.

One of its most fearful attempts for instance, to stop all reformation, and bind people in the galling chains of superstition, occurred in Switzerland at the time when Zuingli and the other Reformers were

awakening and persuading the minds of the free and generous inhabitants of the different cantons. Those which remained Popish, passed laws that it should be capital to any to change their religion; and that, on a set day in every year, they should all go to mass, and the masters of families swear to continue true to the state, and firm in their religion to their lives' end. Afterwards they punished those who fell into what they called heresy, with death and confiscation of goods, on the pretence of its being a violation of the faith thus solemnly sworn to their country.

It is very observable, that where Popery is now reviving in its influence, after the French revolutionary struggles or the iron laws of Bonaparte, it returns with all its folly about it. It is not learning a lesson of wisdom, and silently following its Borneos, and Pascals, and Fénétons, and dropping some of its grosser corruptions; but it re-assumes all its arts, its impositions, its ceremonies, its incense, its processions, its pilgrimages, its image worship, its exclusive claims, its domination over the conscience, its traditions, its opposition to the Bible, its hatred of scriptural education, its resistance to all the first principles and blessings of genuine liberty—in short, its united tyranny, superstition, and idolatry—and this in the full face of day and in the nineteenth century and with infidelity watching for objections to Christianity generally.\*

And what is the general moral effect of this system? It neither sanctifies nor saves. The poison of vice, glossed over with outward forms of decency, eats as doth a canker. The whole attention of man is directed to superstitious ceremonies as a substitute for spiritual obedience. Morality is compromised and exchanged for an adherence to ecclesiastical rites. Voluptuousness, impurity, dishonesty, cunning, hypocrisy, every vice, prevails and is connived at, just as Popery has the more complete sway. The dreadful profanation of the Sabbath by prescription becomes fixed. All the holy ends of it are forgotten, unknown, obliterated. It is the habitual season of unrestrained pleasure. I speak of effects generally; for there are multitudes of individual Catholics, who serve God in sincerity and truth; and who, disregarding the accumulations heaped on the foundation of the faith, build on Jesus Christ and him crucified.

There is, indeed, one class of persons in Catholic countries, which I compassionate from my heart.

\* The Pope has lately issued two Bulls, one to denounce and proscribe the BIBLE—the other to appoint the present year to be observed as a JUBILEE, and promising remission of sins to such as should, in the course of it, make a pilgrimage to Rome!

These two documents should be circulated throughout the whole Christian world. From beginning to end, they demonstrate that Popery is, at this moment, as utterly opposed as it ever was to all freedom of conscience and intelligent use of the Scriptures; and that all hope of its having been, as a system, improved or meliorated, by the course of events and the advancement of knowledge, is at an end. It is fit that scriptural Christians all over the world should settle it in their minds, that Popery, as a system, never has departed, and seems never likely to depart, from that which is its predicted characteristic—**BLASPHEMOUS USURPATION OF THE PLACE OF GOD!**

*Miss. Reg. Jan. 1825.*

They are not sunk in superstition, and yet they have not imbibed the piety of true disciples of Christ; but having been educated during the revolution, have acquired a general boldness and liberality of sentiment; see through much of the mummery of Popery; detect the spirit and aims of a worldly-minded priesthood; are disgusted at the revival of the Jesuits, the opposition to the Bible Society, the resistance to education, the disturbance and removal of the most pious and worthy masters and professors, and the persecution of the Protestants. And yet they are not in earnest enough about religion to take a decided part; the objections of infidels dwell upon their minds—they shrink from ridicule—the fear of reproach prevents their quitting the Roman communion—there is nothing in the Protestantism they are acquainted with, to show them a "more excellent way." The value of the soul and the paramount duty of seeking their own salvation, are considerations which do not enough rouse their minds. Thus they glide down the fatal stream with others, dissatisfied and yet unconverted. These are persons to be won by the friendly conversation of true Christians, to be invited to read suitable books on the evidences and nature of true Christianity, and to be encouraged to seek, and to follow and obey the truth.

But I turn to the Protestantism which we have met with in our tour; and alas, I see deism, infidelity, indifference, a secret contempt of religion, too widely diffused in many quarters. I observe a cold celebration of a few great festivals: but the Sabbath desecrated—holiness of life too little exemplified—the principles of grace, from which only it can spring, forgotten—the Reformation, with its glorious truths, corrupted and obscured. I see a vain human philosophy—scepticism—political views—the interests of a corrupt literature—levity and inconstancy as to the faith of the Gospel, too prevalent. I see persecution itself, the most odious part of Popery, transplanted to some Protestant bodies, and an open defection from the Gospel avowed in the city which was once the praise of the churches.\*

Still, after all, we must thank God that things are in many places greatly improving both among Catholics and Protestants—that the opened Bible, the spirit of free inquiry after truth, the power of

\* The tendency of dominant churches to impose on the consciences of others has appeared even amongst the most pious and orthodox. About 150 years since, this very church of Geneva united with those of Bern and Zurich, in condemning all persons who held the universal extent of our Lord's death; with whom they strangely joined those who impugned the power and authority of the Hebrew vowel points! I need not say, that the paramount authority of these vowel points has long been given up by every scholar; and that the doctrine of Christ having given "himself a ransom for all," is now generally admitted as an undoubted verity of the New Testament. Such is the folly of excess in religious legislation, to say nothing of the danger of revolution—of opening the door to such regulations as that of 1817. It was observed by a member of the House of Commons last session, from Lord Clarendon, that "he had observed in his progress through life, that of all classes of men, the clergy took the worst measure of human affairs." An acute and poignant remark.



conscience, the intercourse of different Protestant states, the operations of various religious societies, the judgments of God which have been abroad in the earth, and, above all, the divine mercy visiting and subduing the hearts of men, are producing a wonderful change. In some quarters the purity of the Gospel has flourished without interruption or decay. But taking a view of the present state of the continent generally, in its two great families of Catholics and Protestants, the Christian traveller cannot but be affected, even to depression, with the prevailing degeneracy.

3. But let me turn to a more pleasing topic, and one that may cheer us with the PROSPECT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION. For who raised up the Reformers in the sixteenth century! Were they not men of "like passions with ourselves?" Cannot a similar race of men be again formed by the mercy of God now? Nay, are there not reasonable hopes that such will be the case? For a visit to the continent leads the traveller over those scenes where the Reformers began their blessed labors. And this is the third observation which I wish to offer. Nothing afforded me, I think, such unmixed pleasure, as entering the very towns, visiting the houses, and reading the letters of those great and able men. I did not penetrate far enough into Germany to see Eisenach, Wittenberg, or Worms, where the magnanimous Luther met his papal antagonists; but I was at Geneva, where Beza, after the death of Luther and Calvin, so admirably led the Reformation.

It was Beza who conducted the discussions of Poissy in 1561, where in the presence of the king of France, (Charles IX.) the king of Navarre, (Henry IV.) the Cardinal of Lorraine, and the French court, he almost effected the reception of the reformed doctrines in that vast kingdom.—The Reformed church in France had then reached its widest limits. The Protestants had two thousand one hundred and fifty churches, some of which contained ten thousand members. In fact, nearly half of France was Protestant in the 16th century; whilst in the present, the 19th, not more than a thirtieth part follows the reformed doctrines. The valuable MS. of the Gospel which bears the name of Beza, (Codex Bezae) was his gift to the University of Cambridge. He died in 1605, aged 86.

I was also at Strasburg, where Martin Bucer, for twenty-six years, was a model of evangelical holiness. Our great Cranmer brought him over with Fagius in 1549, and fixed him in the University of Cambridge, where he read lectures with infinite applause, on St. John's Gospel. He died in 1551, and was buried with the utmost respect, in the University church, the Vice Chancellor and the members of all the colleges attending.

I saw at Basle, the cathedral, and school, and library, where Ecolampadius, from 1515 to his death in 1531, labored in establishing, with equal acuteness and moderation, the reformed doctrines. He was joined with Erasmus in composing the annotations on the New Testament, which so much aided the infant cause of truth. His name was indicative of his character; he was indeed Ecolampadius, "the lamp of the house," a burning and a shining light in the Temple of the Lord.

I visited likewise the abode of Bullinger, who, after the death of Zuingli, was for about forty years at the head of the churches at Zurich.\* I walked in the streets, I saw the churches, I entered the college, I was in the very house, I saw the hand-writing of this blessed man, who, in 1538, received with affectionate hospitality some noble Englishmen, and wrote, at their request, to our Henry VIII., in support of the perfection and authority of the Scriptures; and in 1554, in the reign of the atrocious queen Mary, welcomed Jewel, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, Sandys, afterwards archbishop of York, and others; gave them lodgings in the Cathedral-Close; and when Elizabeth ascended the throne, continued a constant correspondence with them till his death, in 1575. Few measures in our English Reformation were taken without his advice.

All this I should have mentioned to you before. I have, indeed, alluded frequently to the names of some of these Reformers. But I ought to have dwelt more on their piety and talents, their wisdom and courage, their zeal and disinterestedness. For my mind is deeply penetrated with the conviction that the best hope of a GENERAL REVIVAL of religion now, is by studying and imitating such bright examples. Men like these, wise, holy, ardent, devoted to God, raised above a spirit of party in religion, purified from petty passions, separated from the politics of this world, thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of holy Scripture, and working by genuine humility and lowliness, rather than by heat and obstinacy—men, animated above all with the ardent love of "Christ and him crucified"—such persons would soon be the means of restoring decayed religion in the Popish and Protestant churches. To produce such men, the silent circulation of the Bible seems the first step. Of all inventions the noble idea of giving throughout the world the inspired volume of revelation appears to me the most happy, the most pure, and the most important. It is like the works of nature, as simple as it is majestic and efficacious. It has the impress of God. I do not wonder at the open and violent opposition which the Bible Society has provoked. This might be expected, if I am right in the immense importance which I attach to it. The Pope and the church of Rome know that the Bible is against them. They act

\* Bishop Burnet mentions that he saw at Zurich a Latin MS. of the New Testament of the ninth century, in which a preface of St. Jerome prefixed to the Catholic epistles, stated that "he had been more exact in that translation, that he might discover the fraud of the Arians, who had struck out that passage (viz. 1 John v. 7, 8.) concerning the Trinity." If this be correct, it seems to confirm the arguments in favor of the authenticity of the passage. Surely Jerome, who was born in A.D. 331, and lived for nearly a century, must be a competent witness to such a fact. The present bishop of Salisbury's tracts on the authenticity of this text, are entitled on all accounts to the attention of the Biblical student. He informs us that Walafrid Strabo, Erasmus, Socinus, Le Clerc, Sir Isaac Newton, Mill, and Dörhout, consider that the prologue above referred to was Jerome's; and that it proves the existence, in his time, of the Greek text of the seventh verse.—See Bishop Burgess's Vindication, 1823, p. 46, &c.

in character in the Bulls issued against it. The opposition of some Protestants would be much more painful and mysterious, if we did not remember the effects of misrepresentation and controversy, in perverting the judgment of men in spite of their better principles. Let only the friends of the Bible institutions persevere in that meek and peaceable temper which has hitherto so much distinguished them. They are invulnerable so long as the spirit of love goes on to preside over their proceedings and conduct. There is nothing which I do not expect ultimately by their means. Whenever the Bible meets with characters like Leander Van Ess or the pastor Henhöfer, it works its way with irresistible might; or wherever the grace of God makes it the means of first training such characters, it soon leads to like results. Truth, in the very words dictated by the Holy Ghost, enters the mind, and sheds its own glory there. And it is impossible to say in how many hearts that process is actually going on—how many latent Luthers, Malancthons, Calvins, Zuingle, Bucers, Ecolampadiuses, and Bullingers, are now preparing, by a painful study of the Bible, for future usefulness.

4. The example of those Protestant churches which have the widest influence, may also have a great effect, under the blessing of God, to produce and help forward such a revival. Let us aid the inquiring. Let us embody and exhibit the Christianity of which they read in their Bibles. LET US ENDEAVOR TO ADVANCE THE AGE OF TRUE CHRISTIAN CHARITY, founded on the doctrines of the grace of Christ. This is my fourth remark. I entreat my countrymen, and especially the ministers of religion, to cultivate both at home and in their visits to the continent, the spirit of forbearance, wisdom, moderation, and love, which marked the Reformers. Our books are read abroad, our sentiments have a considerable influence. England is the hope of the world. Let then the law of Christian kindness be apparent in all we write and teach. We have had in the church the age of SUPERSTITION—thirteen centuries have witnessed the fatal effects of this on true religion. We have seen, since the revival of letters, our ages of DARING INQUIRY, human reasoning, controversy; and we have tasted the bitter fruits which they have produced. Surely at length it is time for the AGE OF CHARITY, of the love of God and man, to begin—love which receives and uses to their proper end, all the great mysteries of redemption; which dwell on every doctrine and duty in a holy, practical manner; which assimilates every thing to its own pure and heavenly temper; which conforms us to the divine image, and unites us to God himself. The scheme of reducing all men to one confession is vain and hopeless. On minor questions, the best course is to hold with moderation and firmness our own sentiments, whilst we respect those of others. To meet men in anger, and attempt to subdue them by controversy, is the way to augment, instead of lessening, existing evils. LOVE, then, is the truest wisdom. The few commanding doctrines and duties of Christianity may be best recommended in this spirit. Where these are received and practised, remaining disagreements will lose half their mischief, by being de-

prived of all their asperity. Differences of judgment are the infirmity of the MILITANT church. If all men could be brought to one mind, the world would be in a state not to need the new law of charity which our Saviour left us, as the badge of his followers, and the healing medicine of their feverish heats and irritations. I can truly say that if I have erred against the law of peace in any thing I have said in my series of letters I heartily retract it. My intention and my prayer is to unite TRUTH with CHARITY.

5. But I must not dwell on these topics. I just mention a further thought in connexion with them, which frequently occurred to me on my journey—THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN TRAVELLER, WHETHER MINISTER OR NOT, CORDIALLY CO-OPERATING, IN SOME WAY OR OTHER, IN THIS GREAT WORK. Let not the beauties of nature withdraw his mind from the duties, unostentatious but important, which he may connect so easily, so agreeably with them. Let not the hurry of his movements, the novelty of his circumstances, the imperfection of his knowledge of the continental tongues, the infirmity of his health,\* deter him from attempting a little. Such labor for the good of souls elevates and sanctifies a tour undertaken for health or instruction. A conversation with a peasant on the road, a visit to a poor or sick family, the gift of a suitable tract or a New Testament, a word dropped at a table-d'hôte, the encouraging of the more candid and pious clergy, the assisting of Bible and Missionary Societies, the consecration of the Sabbath, the daily devotions of the family, are duties neither difficult nor rare. Examples continually occur of the good thus produced.

A gentleman of Scotland, who had a good deal forgotten his French, came to Geneva, about seven years since, and in a few months, by simply dwelling on the authority and manifest truths of the New Testament, was the means of attracting the attention and regard of a whole circle of

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\* I would here offer a remark or two to invalids. I found in my own instance, that whilst I was moving gently from place to place, my health, which had been undermined by a long series of over-exertion, was sensibly improved. The fine air, the changes of scene, the freedom from ordinary cares and duties, the conversation of my family, the curiosity awakened at every turn, my inquiries, wherever I came, into the moral and religious state of the different towns and countries, my interviews with pious ministers and professors, and especially the mountain tours, all contributed, under God's blessing, to my recovery. When I arrived at Lyon in September, after a journey of three months and about two thousand five hundred miles, I was not like the same person as when I quitted England. The over-hurry of the few last weeks of my tour was the first thing that injured me, so far as I can judge. I travelled, in consequence of my son's illness, too rapidly to Geneva the last time. Again, when I arrived at Paris, I was not enough on my guard. I saw too many friends, and attended too many societies. The hours also were late, compared with what I had been accustomed to. The consequence was, that when I arrived in England, and returned to my usual clerical duties, I soon found myself indisposed. The extremely wet weather on my first arrival added to my complaints; and in



young students, and imbuing their minds with its evangelical doctrine.

An American merchant, settled some time since at Paris, became the centre of really most extensive good, by kindness, piety, liberality, fearlessness, simplicity of heart; though he knew French very imperfectly. The multitude of tracts he gave away was incredible.

Again, an English lady at Lausanne was the means of inconceivable benefit, by occupying every moment of a pretty long residence, in aiding the cause of her God and Saviour, though in no way at all inconsistent with the modesty and humility of her sex.

Another lady was at Montanvert, on the way to the Mer de Glace, a few years since. She wrote in her guide's book the usual attestation to his attention and skill; and then added, "You have often said to me, Lean upon me, follow my steps, and fear nothing. This is what I say to you as to our true Guide and Saviour Jesus Christ. Lean upon Him, follow his steps, and fear nothing. He will conduct you safely in the road, yet more difficult, of eternal life." This advice gratified the man beyond conception; and several years after it was written, he showed it with undiminished pleasure to a visitor, who copied it out, and furnished me with a transcript.

Once more, one of my friends at Rome showed a passage in the New Testament to an Italian gentleman—it was a consolatory chapter under afflictions—he was struck even to admiration, and entreated the loan of the sacred book; adding, that his own Bible was in thirty or more volumes, so that he could scarcely find the text amidst the overwhelming notes.

I only add, that an Englishman of high family opened his hotel, during a tour on the continent, for the celebration of divine service on Sundays. He engaged, from time to time, some clergyman to preach, and sent cards of invitation to all the persons to whom he had access at the towns where he rested. The curiosity excited was prodigious. In many of the chief places in Italy, his salon

three weeks I was totally laid by, with all the indisposition, in an aggravated form, from which I had suffered before I entered upon my tour. I mention my own case thus at length as a caution to others. I would especially recommend them to avoid hurry towards the close of their journey, to return at a season when the weather is likely to be fine, to watch over the first effects of the change of climate and food, and to resume laborious and anxious duties slowly and gradually. This subject leads me to suggest to pious travellers to take with them some tracts suitable to the sick and dying. So many English become ill abroad, that many a tour begun in vanity, may end, under God's blessing, in seriousness and piety, by the aid of a striking tract, or a copy of the New Testament. It is possible even that the last solemn scenes of life may be cheered by the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ, thus conveyed. I should perhaps add, that we found great difficulty in having our English prescriptions made up abroad. I explained to a druggist at Spa a very simple one, which he assured me he understood, adding that he had continually made up similar ones. The medicine, however, was so different from what we had been used to, that I could not venture to let Mrs. W. take it.

was crowded. The Catholics were astonished at an English nobleman appearing to be really in earnest about religion.

But in all these attempts to do good, the charity which I have just been recommending, must reign. Benevolence is an universal language. Those who may not at first understand your sentiments, can feel and appreciate your kindness. All airs of superiority must be avoided, all boasting of England's liberty, riches, power; all intermeddling in politics, all controversy about different churches—I had almost said about different doctrines. Love must be the key to open the heart—Christian love, which delights in truths common to all churches, and interesting to every soul of man, and which knows how to make large allowances for dulness, prejudices of education, early habits, and slow obedience to truth.

If any should doubt the obligation of our thus carrying our religion wherever we travel, let him learn it from the word of God, which demands the dedication of all we have, and under all circumstances, to his service. I need only quote one or two declarations from the New Testament to recall this point to the mind of the pious reader. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, and especially to them that are of the household of faith." "For ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price; wherefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are God's."\*

These, and similar passages, are quite decisive. I know the objections which are raised by timid and worldly-minded persons against this introduction of religion into the ordinary concerns of life. I know the charges of enthusiasm which they advance. I know that ridicule—irresistible ridicule—is the weapon they constantly employ—and that they do all this on the plea of not degrading religion and exposing it to contempt—but I also know that these same kinds of objections have been made in all ages against every holy effort of truly sincere Christians in benefitting their fellow-creatures. Such objections commonly amount to nothing. Similar ones might be raised against any grave and zealous undertaking in the usual pursuits of mankind. Errors against taste should be avoided indeed, where they can; but such errors furnish no argument against the commanding duties of "loving our neighbor as ourselves," and of "going about" like our Saviour, "doing good." The immensely important concerns of eternity are not to be governed by such trifling considerations. It only requires a ray of holy illumination from above, to discern and feel something of the claim which our divine Lord has upon all our love, all our efforts, all our time, all our influence. Nothing is so truly rational and dignified—nothing so elevated, and in the highest degree philanthropic and philosophical, as the benevolent endeavor to raise and purify the minds and habits of our fellow-men. In doing this we claim no miraculous powers, we insert no infallibility of judgment, we presume on no immediate or peculiar care of the

\* Col. iii. 17. 1 Cor. x. 31. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Divine Providence, we supersede no just use of prudence and foresight, we advance no pretences to an interpretation of the mysterious scheme of the government of God, we lessen no motive to activity in ordinary duties—but we plainly maintain that the Bible reveals a religion founded on the sacrifice of Christ and the operations of the Holy Spirit—that this religion is to change the whole moral bias of the affections; and that when the heart is thus renewed, man feels the imperious obligation of laboring to glorify God in every project and every action of his life. The honor of God and the good of men are his object, his passion, his joy. He takes a far warmer interest in this high pursuit, than the scholar, the artist, the warrior, the statesman do in theirs—is more sure of the value of the good he communicates, and more persuaded of the ultimate success which will crown his labors—for he reposes on the ever-present providence of that God who “clothes the grass of the field;” without whom “not a sparrow falls to the ground;” and who has condescended to say, that the “very hairs of our head are all numbered.”

6. BUT GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR THE BLESSINGS WHICH WE ENJOY IN ENGLAND, is a further general sentiment powerfully awakened by a foreign tour. Never was I so impressed with thankfulness to God for the moral, religious, free, prosperous, happy state of my own country, as when I had the opportunity of comparing it with that of the nations of the continent. At home murmurs, objections, difficulties, are sometimes heard and propagated. Men are restless and discontented. But let any one travel abroad, and he must be ungrateful indeed if his complaints are not changed into admiration. I am far from denying the errors of our rulers, or the imperfections still adhering to our legislation and system of laws—this is human. I am still further from denying, that in our public religious conduct, as a nation, there is, abstractedly speaking, very much evil to deplore. I would be the last to dissemble the many sins amongst us which provoke the anger of God, and which are the more criminal in proportion to our knowledge and ample means of instruction—the luxury, the pride, the sad mixture of infidelity and contempt of the Gospel; the departure of too many of our clergy from the reformed doctrines; the low standard of moral and religious feeling in our senate; our divisions and party-spirit on every question; our neglect of adequate means of education for our poor, and of accommodation for the public worship of God; our encouragement of the sale of pernicious liquors; our licentious and blasphemous press; the scandalous disorder of our public places of amusement; our Sunday newspapers, Sunday dissipation, and Sunday travelling; our apathy at the oppression of the innocent African in our West India Islands; these and other public evils no one is more sensible of than myself. No doubt we have causes to look at home. Still, thank God, England is, on the whole, as superior to other lands in the practice of morals, as in the extent and success of her commerce and her arms. Her faults are not of the peculiar malignity which mark Popish countries—we do not shut up the Bible—we do not corrupt religion with open idola-

try and superstition—we do not oppose the traditions of men to the inspired word of God—we do not tyrannize over the conscience—we do not crush the civil and religious liberty of mankind. There never was a time when England stood more free from these darker shades of guilt. As a country, notwithstanding all I have just been saying, every thing moral and religious is advancing. The abolition of the trade in slaves—the renunciation of Sunday drilling—the mitigation of our criminal code—the relinquishment of lotteries—the improvement of prison discipline—the establishments for national education—the grants for missions abroad and for erecting new churches at home—the parliamentary committees for investigating various abuses—the honorable discharge of our pledges and engagements to other states, are all so many proofs of the high religious feeling of England, compared with the continental nations.

Especially the religious freedom of our beloved country ought to excite our warmest gratitude to the Giver of all good. We are too apt to forget our actual blessings, in this respect. But if we recal the past circumstances of Protestant Europe, or even reflect on her present situation, we shall receive a deeper impression of our own advantages. Consider, for example, the sufferings of the Protestants of France the century before last, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes—tens, yea hundreds of thousands of fugitives escaping with the loss of every thing, to England, Holland, and Switzerland—so that in the small town of Lausanne only, in the year 1685, there were 2,000 of the laity and more than 200 ministers, whom some even of the Catholic cantons joined the Protestant in succoring. But these exiles were happy compared with their brethren who were detained in their own country. The cruelties of the dragonnades of Louis XIV. were so much beyond all the common measures of persecution, that bishop Burnet, who witnessed them in his travels, declares that there never was such a violation of all that is sacred, either with relation to God or man.

But why should I speak of times that are past, in order to awaken our thankfulness to God for the actual state of things in England? Consider the present situation of the churches in the valleys of Piedmont—18 or 19,000 of the most humble, industrious, hospitable, kind-hearted, simple, obedient, and pious persons of Christendom under the iron yoke of oppression. Every one knows the history of these churches of the Waldenses or Vaudois, possibly founded by the apostle Paul; and, in all probability, the primitive Christians of the west, as the Syrian Christians are of the east. Who has not read, almost with tears, the heart-rending story of the cruelties they endured from the Papal see during the dark ages? \* I just mentioned the names of these sufferers to you when writing from Turin. But I dwell a moment on their history to awaken us to gratitude. The truth is, that when Christianity was almost lost

\* In the fourteenth century 80,000 were martyred in Bohemia only. I add here a single trait of their deep piety, as an example not unsuitable to ourselves. It is recorded by an enemy. Before they go to meat, the elder amongst the company says, “God, who blessed the five barley leaves and two fishes before



under the Roman Catholic corruptions, it remained in much purity amongst these beloved people, who had spread themselves before the sixteenth century, from the borders of Spain, throughout the south of France, amongst and below the Alps, along the Rhine on both sides of its course, even to Bohemia. They reached also to Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary; communicated their doctrine as far as England; and in Italy stretched down to Calabria. They numbered, about the year 1530, above 800,000 souls.

It was at the accused revocation of the edict of Nantes, in 1685, that Louis XIV. engaged the court of Turin to attempt their utter extermination from the valleys of Piedmont. The Vaudois fled their country in bodies of five or six hundred, some to the Palatinate, others to Brandenburg, others to different parts of Switzerland, desiring only a little bread at different towns to carry them on their way. A few years afterwards, a band of 900, under one of their ministers, reconquered their native valleys; and from this handful of Christian heroes, the present Vaudois sprung. From the year of their return, in 1689, till they became the subjects of France, in 1800, they endured with all long-suffering, the cruel oppressions of the Sardinian government. Bonaparte first granted them religious liberty—this was his policy everywhere; he placed all his subjects on the same footing; at Paris he granted the Protestants the use of four of the Catholic churches; three of which they occupy still—those of Sainte Marie, L'Oratoire, and Les Billettes—so in the other cities of France, Rouen, &c.

Will it be believed, that when the late Victor Emmanuel reascended the throne of Sardinia in 1814, his first measure was to re-enact all the persecuting edicts against this unoffending people. They are now again compelled to desist from work on Catholic festivals, forbidden to exercise the profession of physician or surgeon, prohibited from purchasing land, required to take off their hats when the host is carried about, denied a printing-press, and were refused for several years even the liberty of building a hospital for their sick; whilst their public schools, in which the Bible was taught, were put down, and their children often stolen from them in order to be educated in Popery. In the meantime, the support of their ministers, which was chiefly derived from England, has of late very much failed; and the royal bounty, begun by queen Mary, has been withheld since the year 1797.

But I am drawn on too far. I dwell on the circumstances of these churches, not only to excite our thankfulness to God, who has made us in England so much to differ, but also to take occasion to point out the obligation which we are under, to give a proof of that gratitude, by our aid to our suffering brethren. I found as I passed through Brussels, an excellent Christian friend, who spent five months amongst them a year or

two since, and who revisited them last summer in company with a pious and amiable clergyman, who had been there about ten years before. The inquiries of these friends will probably soon be laid before the British public, and their benevolent assistance solicited—an appeal, which, I am sure, cannot be made in vain.\*

It seems to me, that the returns which the continental sovereigns have in too many instances made to Almighty Goodness for the restoration of peace, by persecution, cruelty, injustice, tyranny, and opposition to Scriptural light and knowledge, must assuredly incur the wrath of the Most High. May England be ever preserved from copying the tyranny and spirit of persecution which in all ages have marked the church of Rome! May she keep as far as possible from relapsing into that bitter, merciless temper, which the glorious Reformation tended to extinguish, but which is ever apt to revive under some disguise or another, unless jealously watched and repressed.—The danger of all dominant churches, though ever so pure in their principles, is formality and pride—a secular spirit—false dignity—decay as to spiritual religion—eagerness in pressing matters of external discipline—the loss of the true spirit of the Gospel, and a haughty oppressive intolerance substituted in its place.†

I will only add, that I was exceedingly grieved to be unable to visit myself these devoted and persecuted Vaudois. At one point of our excursion to Turin, we were within twenty-four miles of their valleys, and this has led me to speak of them; but other indispensable duties made it impracticable for me to devote the time which such a visit would have demanded.

7. I mention as my seventh and last general reflection upon my journey, the duty of exciting ourselves and others, at home and abroad, to FERVENT AND PERSEVERING PRAYER FOR THE

\* Already has 120*l* been collected for their relief amongst the English at Rome, after a sermon by the Rev. Lewis Way. Something has also been begun by friends in England.

Since the appearance of the second edition of this work, the Rev. W. S. Gilly has published a most interesting narrative of his visit to the Vaudois.—He has given a very lively description of the manners and present circumstances of that extraordinary people. Some parts of his narrative are really most affecting. I trust the benevolent designs of the able writer will be seconded by the liberality of the English government and people. A handsome private subscription has been begun, at the head of which are the names of His Majesty the king, and of the Bishops of London and Durham. The banking houses of Messrs. Glyn, Messrs. Bosanquet, and Messrs. Masterman, are appointed for receiving donations.

† I add a thrilling caution from the pen of our great practical commentator.

"It may also be very well worth inquiring whether there be not some remains of Papal superstition and corruption even in Protestant churches; and how far they whose grand object it seems to be to contend *most*, and most *vehemently*, not to say *virulently*, for that which admits of the *least* Scriptural proof, or no Scriptural proof, keep at a distance from this tremendous *wo*." *Scott's Commentary*.—Rev. xiv. 9—11.

his disciples in the wilderness, bless this table and that which is set upon it, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And after meat, he says, "The God which has given us bodily food, grant us his spiritual life; and may God be with us, and we always with him!"—See *Milner* in loc.

**EFFUSION OF THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.** The experience of every thoughtful tourist confirms that of the servants of God in all ages, that man can do nothing of himself; the torrent of human corruption rolls too wide and too strong for his puny arm to stop its course. After all the means we can use, superstition and infidelity—or in the words of Scripture, “the minding of the flesh”—will carry away the various petty boundaries which can be reared against them. God alone has the key of the human heart—Our Lord Christ was “manifested to destroy the works of the devil”—The Divine Spirit is “the Lord and Giver of Life.”

What we want is a **LARGER GIFT OF THE INFLUENCES OF GRACE.** I speak not of the miraculous powers of the Spirit of God; these ceased by the close of the third century. We renounce all pretensions to them. I speak not of dreams or visions, or sensible influxes, or direct inspirations, or new and extraordinary revelations. All these we utterly disclaim. I speak of the ordinary, secret, sanctifying work of God the Spirit, in illuminating, converting, and consoling fallen man; that work which unlocks the understanding, which liberates the will, which purifies the affections, which unites the whole soul to Christ in faith, love, and obedience. The gifts of this blessed agent have been bestowed from time to time in a peculiar manner on the church.

Such a period was that of St. Augustine in the fifth century, to whose conversion I have already referred. Again, under Claudius of Turin, in the ninth century, and Peter Waldo, of Lyon, in the twelfth, a considerable light burst forth, and the followers of Christ, under the name of the Waldenses, were planted throughout Europe. The era of grace and truth returned at the glorious Reformation. Gradually weakened and obscured by human darkness since, it is again needed as much as ever in the present day. Nay, may I not say it has commenced?

Are there not blessed indications that the grace of the Spirit is revisiting the churches? Does not the revival of the doctrines of St. Austin and of the Reformation, or rather of the **BIBLE**, mark this? Does not the present general acknowledgment of the doctrine of the **HOLY GHOST**, and the wide circulation of **THAT BOOK** which He inspired and never fails to bless, indicate it? Do not the increasing number of awakened and converted clergymen in every communion, the diffusion of religious feeling and interest in the higher ranks of society in our own country, the rise and astonishing progress of our religious institutions, mark this? Especially, does not the blessed temper of **LOVE** and **CHARITY** which is so much prevailing, denote it? Do not the favor and aid afforded to pious efforts by our own and other governments, the eagerness of mankind to welcome the benefits we offer them, the men raised up suited for various difficult duties, the translation of the Scriptures into all the languages of the earth, the dispersion of missionaries amongst the heathen and Mahomedan nations, betoken this? Does not the surprising success of the Bible Society in the world generally, and of the various missionary bodies in their particular labors in Western Africa,

in the South Seas, in the East and West Indies, and in Caffraria, lead to the same conclusion?

It is true, there is much remaining to be done—we overrate, perhaps, the comparative amount of what is performed. Deduct as much as you please on this account; I take the remainder, and then ask, whether there is not still enough confessedly accomplished, to assure us that a new era of grace has begun, and to encourage us to fervent prayer for that **LARGER EFFUSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** which can effect every thing we yet desire? Already has the attention of the Protestant churches been called to this momentous subject. In many parts of England, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, America, treatises have been widely circulated, courses of sermons preached, and meetings for prayer instituted, to excite attention to the importance of this great blessing. Were it once granted, it would include every other. And surely the position of the spiritual church, especially in England, in parts of Germany, and in America; the feverish state of many of the nations of the continent; the open and surprising successes in Greece and the Southern Americas; the commotions and discontent throughout Spain and Italy; the rapid diffusion of literature and of religious knowledge over the world; the general strain of divine prophecy; the spirit of inquiry excited among the Jews; and the impenetrable obstinacy and corruption of the eastern and western apostacies, as connected with the near flowing out of the three prophetic synchronical periods of 1260 years—surely all this may lead us to “lift up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh.” For the three great events of the fall of Papal Antichrist, the overthrow of the Mahomedan imposture, and the conversion and return of the houses of Israel and Judah, are considered by most Protestant expositors—Joseph Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Hurd and Horsley; Mr. Scott, Mr. Faber, &c.—as approaching, yea, **AS AT THE DOORS.**

But to leave this general view of the subject, I observe that prayer for the Holy Ghost would, at all events, tend to sanctify and bless our own hearts, our families, our houses, our children, our projects, our labors amongst others. It would thus make us a blessing wherever we travelled. I knew not that any reflection was more frequently excited in my mind during my tour than this, of the necessity of prayer for **DIVINE GRACE.** What I could myself actually do, was little; but where I could not help by my efforts, I could pray.—Many painful scenes of superstition or infidelity, I could only lament over—but God I knew could bring the remedy for them. The divine doctrines which I wished to hear from Christian pulpits, I could not supply—but the Holy Spirit, I believed, could implant them in the heart, and pour them from the tongue of every individual minister.—The moral chains of thousands and tens of thousands I could not break—but I was assured the blessed Spirit could dissolve them gradually, or even at once, by his secret power. The miseries, and sufferings, and persecutions, which I saw around me, I could not alleviate—but the Holy Ghost, I doubted not, could effectually arrest and heal them.

Prayer, therefore, for God's Spirit, is the duty.



the interest, the happiness of every Christian, both at home and abroad. If Englishmen travel in this temper, the more intercourse they have with the continent the better; they will benefit all whom they visit—a fragrance, so to speak, yea, “the savor of the knowledge of Christ” will be diffused around them, and incalculable good be communicated and received. In any other temper than that of prayer, let no one venture on a ground which must be to him sown with dangers and temptations. He will injure, instead of assisting, both himself and others. The prejudices against the Protestant doctrine and evangelical truth, which the ill conduct of Englishmen abroad has implanted or confirmed, are deplorable: whilst the mischiefs which many young Protestants have brought home with them, as to moral and religious habits, are perhaps still more to be lamented. I cannot, therefore, conclude this series of Letters more suitably, than by saying that, if the Christian needs the support of prayer and the grace of the Blessed Spirit at home, where he is surrounded with pious friends, aided by habit, and stimulated to his duty by abundant means of grace; much more will he require this assistance abroad, where, many of his usual safe-guards being removed, and numberless distractions and snares presenting themselves, he will often find that his only effectual means of safety are the solitude of his closet, meditation of Holy Scripture, and prayer for the sacred Spirit of God.

I am, yours affectionately,

D. W.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

THE delay in the publication of the French Translation of Mr. Scott's Comment on St. Matthew has not only arisen from the causes stated in the note, (p. 111): but from the necessity of each sheet being sent to London, and the impracticability of finding type sufficient to allow of this journey, without intervals in the progress of the work. Four sheets are set up together (the type required for which is immense) and the proofs are worked off on their return to Paris as quickly as possible, and the type released for the subsequent parts of the copy. But still about six weeks elapse between the printing of a first proof and the final working of it off. A portion of the delay arises from the numerous corrections in each sheet, demanding twenty or thirty hours of intense application. In the meantime, what is done, is, I have every reason to believe, WELL DONE; and in a work of so much importance, I have preferred the inconvenience of delay to the ruin of the whole enterprise by an inaccurate translation. Half the Gospel, or nearly so, is now printed off, and the subscribers may rely on no exertion being spared on my part to see this first division of the work—the Gospel of St. Matthew, actually published this summer.

I have thought it right, in the meantime, to place this undertaking under the care of a public society with a responsible committee. The SPANISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATION SOCIETY, (instituted in 1825, and of which the monthly meetings are held

for the present at No. 13, Guildford street,) has the disposal of the funds in hand and conducts the design.

Whether the Gospel when published will excite public attention and be attended with any considerable benefit, must depend on the Divine Mercy which alone can produce such an effect. But I have a confidence that great good may be expected ultimately to follow from it. The inconsiderate objections raised on the ground of the levity of the French character, and the solid, ponderous qualities of Mr. Scott's writings, have little weight.—It is not for the nation of France or its general readers that any comment would be designed but for the ministers and Pastors of churches, for the serious and inquiring scholars and students, for the sedate and pious heads of families. And does any one who is at all acquainted with the writings of Mestrezat, Faucheur, Dobose, Drelincourt, and others of the French Protestant school, doubt whether long and grave discourses on religion can fix the attention of French Protestants and engage their esteem? Or can any one, who looks into the mass of comment in De Sacy or Calmet—the one in 32 thick 8vo. volumes, of 8 or 900 pages each, the other in 9 folios, and both of them unwieldy compilations of mystical and feeble and inapplicable religious glosses, without any approach to an evangelical, manly, sensible, clear exposition of the mind of the Spirit throughout the Holy Scriptures,—doubt of the success of a work not by any means so heavy in its form, and in its matter so incomparably superior? A revival of religion is a revival of seriousness, of solidity of character, of readiness to study, and solemnity of mind to examine, the Holy Word. The frivolity of Voltaire is the frivolity of irreligion. But I need not enlarge—the deliberate opinion of all the leading scholars and ministers whom I have met with in France and Switzerland, and the 500 subscribers already obtained to this first publication, are at the least a sufficient authority for the essay, the trial, the experiment of circulating throughout every part of the world where the French language is spoken, the best practical comment which has appeared in these later ages of the Christian church.

The proposed Translation of Milner's Church History into French, has, I am sorry to say, been suspended by the continued inroads of illness and pressure of engagements on the friend who had undertaken the work at Brussels. But into the Spanish language the first volume is already translated by the society which I have mentioned, for the benefit of the Spanish American; and the French Translation will be prosecuted as the funds may allow, and suitable translators present themselves.

As I am giving these explanations, I will just add that the state of the German Protestant churches to which I have alluded in my account of Franckfort (p. 20) has been fully developed, since the publication of the third edition of this tour, by a masterly work from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Rose of Horsham. I had no conception, from the brief remarks which my valuable Franckfort friend made to me, of the extent and inveteracy of the evil. What a portentous defection from the faith! What a feeble, corrupt, wayward thing is the human

mind, when it once leaves the plain rule of the divine word! I rejoice to hear that things are on the whole again improving. In the meantime, let no young Christian be moved in his faith by these pretended discoveries of a spurious philosophy in THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE, any more than the reformers were three centuries back, by the pretended discoveries of a spurious religion AS TO THE RULE OF FAITH AND THE AUTHORITY OF TRADITION. Skepticism and superstition are but two diseases of the same fallen heart. To explain away by sophistry the obvious meaning of the Scriptures—and to forbid the reading of them by a claim of authority over the conscience, are evils of a kindred nature. Satan our great enemy works by the folly of human learning now, as he did by the folly of human ignorance three or four centuries back. The PRIMARY TEACHER will guide sincere and humble souls through the mazes of each kind of error, to the truth and blessedness of redemption in the divine person and sufferings of the Son of God, and the mighty transforming operations of his grace.

I may as well add, on the subject of the Waldeness before mentioned, that a valuable work\* just published by the Rev. T. Sims will give the reader the latest accounts of these important churches. The renewal of the royal grant, the endowment of an hospital, the establishment of schools, and the supply of books, are all benefits of the very last moment, obtained for them by the exertions of the committee to which I have referred—the amount of subscription is between £4000 and £5000. The excellent volume of the Rev.

J. Scott in continuation of Milner's Church History, gives a most interesting summary of the History of the Vaudois at the time of the Reformation.

If I were to say any thing further before I conclude this postscript, it would be to express my regret if any expressions in the course of the work have unnecessarily wounded the feelings of individuals. I have endeavored to guard against any reproach on this score by omitting such circumstances as would lead to the fixing of any of my remarks on particular persons. But it is possible that some reflections when read in the circles where they are supposed to be most applicable, may still be regarded as personal and severe. I can only therefore thus in general testify my sorrow if I have unintentionally laid myself open to such misinterpretations. My desire has been to speak, frankly indeed, and honestly, without disguise or concealment, but still with the consideration due to the just feelings of every individual with whom I had the pleasure of any intercourse when abroad. Perhaps the language which I have occasionally used on the subject of the Roman Catholic superstitions may, after all, be thought the most liable to objection—as being both too general and too strong. After an interval of nearly four years, I will confess that I think such an objection is not without its force. At the same time, truth is truth; and the warmth of a description flowing from the heart, at the first witnessing of the corruptions of the great apostate church, is perhaps excusable, so far as the motive is concerned. And possibly the very strong language used in the Divine Revelations of St. John, as to this portentous defection from the faith, may warrant much of that language of adhorrence which might otherwise be excessive, or harsh and unkind. But in this, as well as in every thing else, the candid reader will judge.

*Islington March, 1827.*

\* "An historical defence of the Waldeness or Vaudois, inhabitants of the Valley of Piedmont, by Jean Rodolphe Peyran, late pastor of Pomaret and Moderator of Waldenesian church, with an introduction and appendix by the Rev. Thomas Sims, M. A. Rivingtons. 1826."



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**SACRA PRIVATA:**

**OR THE**

**PRIVATE MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS**

**OF THE**

**RIGHT REV. THOMAS WILSON, D. D.**

**LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.**



## PREFACE.

THE truly Reverend Doctor THOMAS WILSON, fifty-eight years Bishop of Sodor and Man, was blessed with the spirit of prayer in a very uncommon measure: of which his *Sacra Privata*, or *Private Meditations* and *Prayers*, are an eminent instance.

They have hitherto been locked up from the world in an expensive book; and are mixed throughout with so much meditation and prayer that can come properly from the clergy only, (to whom they are an invaluable treasure,) as to unfit them for general use.

They are now presented to the public in a separate volume: so that pious Christians may, at a reasonable expense, distribute them amongst such people as either will not or cannot buy them; and the petitions peculiar to the clergy only are all thrown out.

The pious reader will find those Meditations and Prayers too long, according to the present division

of them, which there is no occasion to adhere to.—He may take them up, and lay them down, at his own discretion and convenience. It is recommended to him to go through them regularly, and to continue the use of them his whole life; selecting such parts for more frequent meditation, as are best adapted to his necessity and disposition.

As prayer is one of the most important works a man can be engaged in, and few find themselves able to discharge it in the manner they wish to do; it is humbly hoped, that this book, if duly attended to as it deserves, may with God's assistance teach them to pray; may lead our thoughts to meditate on religious subjects; and habituate us to clothe our meditations in the language of decent, pious, and fervent prayer.

That this valuable book may have this effect, is the intention and the earnest prayer of

THE EDITOR.

## SACRA PRIVATA.

### ON DEVOTION AND PRAYER.

TRUE Devotion consists in having our hearts always devoted to God as the sole Fountain of all happiness, and who is ready to hear and help his otherwise helpless, miserable creatures.

It is to be attained,

1st. By earnest prayer. HE THAT HUNGERS AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, WILL CERTAINLY BE FILLED.

2dly. By possessing our hearts with a deep sense of our own misery, our wants, and danger: This is the grace of humility.

3dly. By considering God's goodness, power, and readiness to help us: This is called faith in God.

Lastly; By convincing our hearts of the vanity of every thing else to afford us any real help or comfort: This is to be effected by self-denial.

Dying persons are generally more devout than others, because they then see their own misery, that nothing in this world can help them, and that God is their only refuge.

We must change our lives if we desire to change our hearts. God will have no regard to the prayers of those who have none to his commands.

The spirit of God will not dwell in a divided heart. We cannot feel the pleasure of devotion while the world is our delight. Not that all pleasures are criminal; but the closer union we have with the world, the less is our union with God. A Christian, therefore, who strives after devotion, should taste sensual pleasures very sparingly; should make necessity, not bodily delight, his rule.

In order to dispose our hearts to devotion, THE ACTIVE LIFE is to be preferred to the CONTEMPLATIVE.

To be doing good to mankind, disposes the soul most powerfully to devotion. And indeed we are surrounded with motives to piety and devotion, if we would but mind them.

The poor are designed to excite our liberality;—the miserable, our pity;—the sick, our assistance;—the ignorant, our instruction;—those that are fallen, our helping hand. In those that are vain, we see the vanity of this world. In those that are wicked, our own frailty. When we see good men rewarded, it confirms our hope; and when evil men are punished, it excites us to fear.

He that would be devout must beware of indulging an habit of wandering in prayer. It is a crime that will grow upon us, and will deprive us of the blessings we pray for.

Avoid, as much as may be, multiplicity of business: Neither the innocency nor the goodness of the employment will excuse us, if it possess our hearts when we are praying to God.

When our Lord bids us to TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW, he intended to hinder those cares and fears which are apt to distract our devotions,—which are the more unreasonable, because they can never change the state of things.

Never be curious to know what passes in the world, any further than duty obliges you; it will only distract the mind when it should be better employed.

Never intermit devotion, if you can help it; you will return to your duty like Sampson when his locks were cut, weak and indifferent as other people of the world.

The oftener we renew our intercourse with God, the greater will be our devotion.

Frequent prayer, as it is an exercise of holy thoughts, is a most natural remedy against the power of sin.

Importunity makes no change in God, but it creates in us such dispositions as God thinks fit to reward.

Make it a law to yourself to meditate before you pray; as also to make certain pauses, to see whether your heart goes along with your lips.

They whose hearts desire nothing, pray for nothing.

Give me, O God, the spirit of true devotion, such as may give life to all my prayers, so that they may find acceptance in thy sight, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

### SACRA PRIVATA.

Mat. vi. 6. *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

How good is God! who will not only give us what we pray for, but will reward us for going to him, and laying our wants before him.

May I always present myself before God,—with a firm faith and hope in his promises and mercy;—with great reverence to his infinite majesty;—with the humility of an offender;—and with a full purpose of keeping all God's commandments!

May the thoughts of eternity quicken my devotions;—my wants make me earnest;—my backslidings make me persevere;—and may I never wilfully give way to any distracting thoughts.

May I wait with patience, and leave it to Thee, my God and Father, how and when to grant my petitions.

He that has learned to pray as he ought, has got the secret of an holy life.

It is a greater advantage to us than we imagine, that God does not grant our petitions immediately. We learn by that, that whereunto we have already attained, it was the gift of God.

The best way to prevent wandering in prayer is, not to let the mind wander too much at other times; but to have God always in our minds in the whole course of our lives. The end of prayer is not to inform God, but to give man a sight of his own misery; to raise his soul towards heaven, and to put him in mind that there is his Father and his inheritance.

Matt. vii. 7. "Ask, and it shall be given you."

Grant me, Lord, a faith which shall make me know my wants, that I may ask them with earnestness and humility, and depend upon thy gracious promise.

### THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN.

That man leads a sincere Christian life,

1st. Who endeavors to serve and obey God to the best of his understanding and power.

2dly. Who strives to please his neighbor to edification.

3dly. Who endeavors to do his duty in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call him.

Whoever would continue in the practice of these things unto his life's end, it is necessary that he should,—call himself often to an account, whether he does so or not;—constantly pray for grace to know, and to do, his duty;—and preserve himself in such a teachable



temper as to be always ready to receive the truth when it is fairly proposed to him.

It is a rudeness amongst men to ask a favor, and not stay for an answer. And do we count it no fault to pray for blessings,—and never to think of them afterwards,—never to wait for them,—never to give God thanks for them?

Let us make prayer familiar to us, for without the help of God, we are every hour in danger.

The Devil knows, that when we have a relish for prayer, and apply ourselves in good earnest to it, we are in the way of life; he therefore strives by all ways possible to divert us.

Let us not run over our prayers with an insensible and distracted mind.

Let your prayers be as *particular as may be*, against the sins of your particular state, and for the graces which you in particular do most stand in need of. This is the best preservative against sin;—makes us best acquainted with our condition; puts us continually in mind of mending what is amiss; lets us see what particular graces we most want, what are most needful for the cure of our own particular corruption and disorder; and is the best trial of our hearts. For example; if I pray for *charity*, and for every instance which is necessary to render me truly charitable, I pray for grace—to avoid evil speaking; to pray for my enemies; to do them good, &c., and so of all other sins and graces.

God grant that I may never seek his face in vain!

Luke xi. 1. *Lord, teach us to pray.* Pour upon us the spirit of supplication and prayer.

God will deny us nothing that we ask in the name of his Son.

#### PRAYERS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

When we offer our prayers through his mediation, it is then *he* that prays, *his* love that intercedes, *his* blood that pleads, it is *he* who obtains all from his Father.

#### PREPARATORY PRAYER.

O Holy Spirit of grace! give us a true sight of our miseries, and a sincere shame and sorrow, when we make confession of our sins; a feeling sense of our need of mercy, and an hope of obtaining pardon, when we beg it for thy Son's sake. May we resign our wills to Thee, and to thy goodness, when we pray for temporal things; and when we pray for spiritual graces, may we hunger and thirst after righteousness. Give us a real love for thy holy Word, and grace to hear it with attention. May we thankfully close with all the means of grace and salvation. When we praise thee for thy works of nature and of grace, and give Thee thanks for thy mercies, let us do it with high esteem and gratitude. Cause us to hear thy holy Word with faith and attention, and to profit by what we hear, that we may return from thy church with a blessing.

#### MORNING PRAYER.

Joshua xxiv. 15. *Choose you this day whom you will serve.*

Whom have I in heaven but thee, O Lord? and there is none on earth that I desire besides Thee.—Thou art my God, and I will thank thee; Thou art my God, and I will serve thee. Be thou my only ruler and governor.

They that have a convenient place to sleep in, and they that have the comfort to sleep, have both great reason to be thankful. And even they that want these mercies, ought to bless God, if in the midst of these afflictions he is pleased to refresh them with the comforts of grace.

Gracious God, continue to me these favors so long, and in such measure, as shall most contribute to thy honor, and my salvation. And in great mercy support and relieve all that want these blessings.

What shall I offer unto the Lord for his mercies renewed unto me every morning? "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise."\*

But most unfit is mine to be to God presented, until I have obtained his pardon, through the merits of the Lord Jesus, for the many sins by which it hath been defiled.

Jer. iii. 12. "I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God."

Ps. xxxii. 5. "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, O God, and mine iniquities will I not hide."

I do therefore implore thy pardon, and plead thy gracious promises, *with full purpose of heart*, by the assistance of thy grace, never again to return to folly.

Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

I cannot answer for mine own heart; but there is no word, O Lord, impossible with thee. In Thee do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.

Keep it ever in the heart of thy servant, that it is *indeed an evil thing and bitter to offend the Lord.*

Keep me from presumptuous sins, that I may never grieve thy Holy Spirit, nor provoke Thee to leave me to myself.

Matt. xxvi. 41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Lord, make me ever mindful of my infirmities and backslidings, that I may be more watchful, and more importunate for grace, for the time to come.

1 Peter v. 8. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

O Lord, grant that this adversary of our souls may never find me off my guard, or from under thy protection.

Matt. xvi. 24. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

O my Saviour! how long have I professed to follow Thee, without following the blessed steps of thy most holy life; thy *patience* and *humility*; thy great disregard for the world, its pleasures, profits, honors, and all its idols!

O Lord, obtain for me the spirit of mortification and self-denial, that I may follow Thee, as I hope to live with Thee for ever. Amen.

Matt. vi. 24. "No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

May my fear and love never be divided between Thee and the world. May I never set up any thing, O God, in competition with thee in the possession of my heart. May I never attempt to reconcile thy service with that world which is at enmity with Thee, my God and Father.

Mark x. 17. "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?"

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

O that this love of God may be the commanding principle of my soul! May I always have this comfortable proof of his love abiding in me, that I study to please him, and to keep his commandments. And may my love to my neighbor be such as he has commanded, that I may forgive, and give, and love, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Eccles. xii. 13. "Fear God, and keep his command

\* Psalm li. 17.

ments, for this is the whole duty of man :” that is, the happiness of man.

May I, great God, continue in thy fear all the day long. May I keep thy statutes, and observe thy laws.

Heb. iv. 13. “All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

Grant that I may always live and act as having Thee, O God, the constant witness of my conduct, for Jesus Christ’s sake.

Eccles. ix. 10. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might : for the night cometh when no man can work.”

Make me, O God, ever sensible of the great evil of delaying the work in its season, which thou hast appointed, lest the night surprise me unawares.

1 John v. 14. “This is the confidence we have in God, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”

That it may be unto thy servant according to his word, I beseech Thee, to hear me in the full importance of that holy prayer which thy blessed Son hath taught us :

*Our Father, which art in Heaven :*

In whom we live, and move, and have our being ; grant that I, and all Christians, may live worthy of this glorious relation, and that we may not sin ; knowing that we are accounted thine.

We are thine by adoption O make us thine by the choice of our will.

*Hallowed be thy name.*

O God, whose name is great, wonderful, and holy, grant that I and all thy children may glorify Thee, not only with our lips, but in our lives ; that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

*Thy kingdom come.*

May the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. And may all that own Thee for their King, become thy faithful subjects, and obey thy laws. Dethrone, O God, and destroy Satan, and his kingdom ; and enlarge the kingdom of grace.

*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

We adore thy goodness, O God, in making thy will known to us in thy holy Word. May this Thy Word be the rule of our will, of our desires, of our lives, and actions. May we ever sacrifice our will to thine ; be pleased with all thy choices for ourselves and others ; and adore thy providence in the government of the world.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

O Heavenly Father, who knowest what we have need of, give us the necessities and comforts of this life with thy blessing ; but above all give us the bread that nourisheth to eternal life.

Acts xvii. “O God, who givest to all life, and breath, and all things ; give us grace to impart, to such as are in want, of what thou hast given more than our daily bread.

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Make us truly sensible of thy goodness, and mercy, and patience towards us, that we may from our hearts forgive every one his brother their trespasses.

May my enemies ever have place in my prayers and in thy mercy.

*And lead us not into temptation.*

Support us, O Heavenly Father, under all our saving trials, and grant that they may yield us the peaceable fruits of righteousness

*But deliver us from evil.*

From all sin and wickedness, from our spiritual enemy, and from everlasting death, good Lord deliver us.

Deliver us from the evil of sin, and from the evil of punishment.

Deliver us, O Heavenly Father, from our evil and corrupt nature ; from the temptations and snares of an evil world ; and from falling again into the sins we have repented of.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

By thy Almighty power, O King of Heaven, for the glory of thy name, and for the love of a Father, grant us all these blessings which thy Son hath taught us to pray for.

Unto him that is able to do for us abundantly more than we can ask or think, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

To God the Creator, the Preserver, and Disposer of all things, be the glory of all the good wrought in us, by us, and upon us.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Thine infinite power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and truth, are the only sure foundation on which we may depend. O give us a firm faith in these thy glorious perfections.

With angels and archangels, and all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy LORD GOD OF HOSTS, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O God most High. Amen.

Jude 24, 25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Rom. xi. 36. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Rom. xvi. 27. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

Mark ix. 23. “All things are possible to him that believeth.”

Yes, Lord, and therefore I beg that faith of Him to whom all things are possible, that I may be able to discover, to avoid, to resist, and to root out, whatever is evil in me.

O Jesus, obtain this grace for thy otherwise helpless creature.

Grant that I may this day escape all the snares laid for me by the devil, the world, or mine own corrupt heart.

Grant that I may this day omit no part of my duty.

1 Tim. iv. 15. “Give thyself wholly to these things, that thy profiting may appear to all.”

God grant that I may do so ; and I pray God preserve me from ease, idleness, and trifling away my precious time.

Philemon 4. “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.”

Extend and suit thy graces to all conditions of men, that we may all be upright in our dealings, obedient to our governors, peaceable in our lives, sober, honest, temperate, chaste in our conversation, and charitable to the poor, and one towards another.

Increase the number and the graces of all such as love and fear Thee, enlighten the minds of the ignorant, awaken the consciences of the careless, silence the gainsayers, convert the profane, and all that hold the truth in righteousness.

Rebuke the spirit of antichrist, idolatry, and liber-



turism,—the sins of intemperance, licentiousness, litigiousness, and defrauding the public.

In tender mercy remember, O God, all sick and dying persons, that they may omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with Thee. Be gracious unto all that are under any affliction of mind or body, or under any pressing calamity, all desolate widows and fatherless children,—all that call upon Thee in their distress, and have none else to help them.

Prov. xxi. 1. "The king's power is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of waters, he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Let this thy power, O Lord, be magnified on all that are in authority. That we may be governed with truth and justice, by men fearing and honoring God, protecting the Christian Religion, and punishing evil doers. To this end vouchsafe them, I beseech Thee, all the graces necessary for their high station, and for their eternal happiness.

Col. iv. 1. "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

O heavenly Lord and Master, bless me with good and faithful servants. Let thy blessing be upon them, and upon my affairs committed to their care; and may I never be wanting in my duty to them, for Jesus Christ's sake.

#### RELATIONS, BENEFACTORS, &c.

Be gracious, O God, to all my relations, benefactors, enemies, and all that have desired my prayers; all who, by their own labors, do minister to our necessities, together with all our known and unknown benefactors. Render, O God, a good reward, and a plentiful return, to all those who have been kind and charitable. Grant that we may all so live here, as that we may meet hereafter in the Paradise of God.

John xvi. 23. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

These are what I ask O God and Father, above all things, for myself, and for all that have desired my prayers: That we may be restored to thy likeness, and never deface it by our sins; that the image of Satan may be destroyed in us; that all carnal affections may die in us; and that all things belonging to the Spirit may dwell in our hearts by faith; That thy name, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him; that our hearts may be entirely thine; that we may never grieve thy Holy Spirit; but that we may continue thine for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Ephes. iv. 29. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Grant, O God, that I may delight in thy Law; that my conversation may be truly Christian.

May I never hear with pleasure, nor ever repeat, such things, as may dishonor God, or injure my neighbor, or my own character.

James iv. 11. "Speak not evil one of another."

Ephes. v. 4. "Foolish talking or jesting are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks."

Ps. cxxiii. 3. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips."

Matt. xii. 34. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. How can ye, being evil, speak good things?"

O Holy Spirit of grace, enable me to overcome the shame of a degenerate age, which will hear of nothing with delight, but what concerns this world. O touch my heart with the true love of God, the excellences of his laws, the pleasantness of his service, and the wonders of his providences. This I beg for Jesus Christ's sake.

John xv. 7. "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

These, O Jesus, are the things that I ask. *Intercede for me!* that I may be truly sensible of the diseases I labor under, and thankfully embrace the means which thy goodness hath ordained for my recovery.

Grant that the end of all my actions and designs may be the glory of God.

Enable me to resist all the sinful appetites of my corrupt nature.

Grant that I may hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Vouchsafe me the spirit of adoption,—of supplication and prayer,—of praise and thanksgiving.

Obtain for me, O Jesus, the graces of mortification and self-denial; the graces of a true humility, and the fear of God.

Grant, O God, that I may never knowingly live one moment under thy displeasure, or in any known sin.

Grant, O God, that as I have been regenerate, and made thy child by adoption and grace, I may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Enable me, gracious God, to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, that I may be partaker of the Divine nature.

Lord, grant me grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with a pure heart and mind to follow Thee, the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let thy love, O God be shed abroad in my heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and grant that it may appear in my life, my conversation, my words, and actions, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Blessed be God that I was admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion. Grant, O God, that I may avoid all those things that are contrary to my profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Keep me, I beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, unceasingly the protection of thy good providence, and make me to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Put away from me all hurtful things, and give me those things that be profitable for me, through Jesus Christ.

Mercifully grant unto me, O God, such a measure of thy grace, that running the way of thy commandments, I may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partaker of thy heavenly treasure through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Forgive me those things whereof my conscience is afraid, and give me those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ.

That I may obtain that which thou dost promise, make me to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ.

Keep me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things necessary to my salvation, through Jesus Christ.

The Lord deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly kingdom: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

O that thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart, O God, through Jesus Christ.

Of thy bountiful goodness, O Lord, keep me, I beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt me, that I may cheerfully accomplish those things which thou wouldst have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, O God, that I may be cleansed from all my sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the bonds of those sins, which through my frailty I have committed, for Jesus Christ's sake.

#### FAITH.

O that I may believe in thee, O God, and put my

whole trust and confidence in Thee alone, and not in any thing that I myself can do.

Grant, O God, that I may so perfectly, and without all doubt, believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that my faith in thy sight may never be reproved, for the sake of the same Jesus Christ.

#### AGAINST WAVERING.

Grant, O God, that we may not be carried about with every blast of vain doctrine, but that we may be firmly established in the truth of thy holy gospel, through Jesus Christ.

Grant, O God, that I may perfectly know thy Son Jesus Christ.

Grant, O God, that I may perfectly know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life*; the *Author* of the *Way*, the *Teacher* of the *Truth*, and the *Giver* of *Life*; that I may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ.

#### COVETOUSNESS.

Give me *grace* to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches and pleasures through Jesus Christ.

Grant that I may both perceive and know what things I ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ.

Grant me, O God, the true circumcision of the Spirit, that my heart, and all my members, being mortified from all carnal lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will.

O that we, who know Thee now by faith, may, after this life, have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead.

In all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth thy right hand to save and defend us.

#### CHARITY.

O send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of Charity, that very bond of peace and of all virtue, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee.

Grant, I do most humbly beseech Thee, O God, that as by thy special grace, Thou dost put into my mind good desires, so by thy continual help I may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ.

O everlasting God, grant, that as thy Holy Angels do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succor and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ.

Grant me grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in virtuous and godly living, that I may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee.

I pray God, my whole spirit, (my understanding, will, and conscience,) my soul, (my appetites, affections, and passions,) and my body, (the tabernacle of my soul,) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May I take pleasure in abiding in thy presence, O God; in depending upon Thee; in leaving myself entirely to thy disposal, as a continual sacrifice to thy will.

Give me a victory over all my sins and imperfections; increase in me the grace of *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*; of *humility*, *meekness*, *patience*, and *resignation*, and all other Christian virtues: for Jesus Christ's sake.

Preserve me, gracious God, from *spiritual pride*; from ascribing anything I have done, or can do, to myself, and robbing Thee of the glory of saving me from eternal ruin.

Take possession, O Jesus, of thy right in my soul, which thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood; and root out all self-righteousness, self-interest, and self will; that thou mayest be my righteousness, and all in me

#### REPENTANCE.

Give me, O God, such a true sorrow for my sins, as

shall enable me to embrace all the necessary means, how bitter soever, for rooting sin out of my soul.

#### HUMILITY.

1 Pet. v. 5. *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

I have all the reason in the world to be humble. Without God I am nothing. Without his help and grace I can do nothing that is good. Without his word I know nothing. Of myself, I deserve nothing but punishment. Of my own, I have nothing but faults, imperfections, and sins, an inclination to evil, an aversion to good, unruly senses, ungovernable passions, unreasonable affections.

1 Cor. i. 30. "O Lord Jesus Christ, who art made unto us of God, our *wisdom* by revealing him and his glorious perfections; our *righteousness*, by satisfying the justice of God in our nature; our *sanctification*, by procuring for us the Holy Ghost, and by restoring us, being sinners, to God's favor; our *redemption*, by redeeming us from death eternal. O Jesus, for these mighty favors, all love and glory be to Thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen.

#### THE WAY OF AN HAPPY LIFE.

Lay nothing too much to heart; desire nothing too eagerly—rejoice not excessively, nor grieve too much for disasters; be not violently bent on any design; nor let any worldly cares hinder you from taking care of your soul; and remember, that it is necessary to be a Christian (that is, to govern one's-self by motives of Christianity) in the most common actions of civil life.

Col. iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him."

He that would not fall into temptation, must have a presence of mind, a watchful eye over himself; he must have great things in view; distinguish betwixt time and eternity; or else he will follow what passion, not what reason and religion suggest.

#### CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Whosoever aspires after, (being so united to God, as to be one spirit with him,) must resolve to do all things with this sole view, TO PLEASE GOD. This I purpose, this I forbear, this I undertake, this I do, this I suffer in obedience to the will of God. This should be our express purpose, at all times, when we have time to make it; and should be often renewed, lest our own will come to be the ruler of our actions. If I am careful to do this, I shall always have my end, whether I succeed, or be disappointed, being convinced it is God's will.

Rom. xvi. 14. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Grant, O Lord, that "I may keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means I should be a cast-away."

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good. Let him seek peace, and ensue it."

Give me, O Lord, a wise, a sober, a serious, a religious heart.

Preserve me from evil councils, and rash enterprises. O make thy way plain before my face.

Support me this day under all the difficulties I shall meet with.

I offer myself to thee, O God, this day, to do in me, and with me, as to Thee seems most meet.

Vouchsafe me, gracious God, the spirit of adoption,

\* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

† 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9, &c.



whereby I may cry *Abba, Father*, and apply to Thee, through Jesus Christ, not as an angry judge, but as to a merciful and loving father.

Remember, that the life of man is only to be valued for its usefulness.

John xv. 12, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another."

O Thou, who hast given me this command and pattern, give me a sincere desire of following, and grace and power to do it.

James v. 15. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

O Lord of life and death! have mercy upon all those who are visited with sickness; sanctify this thy fatherly correction, that they may search their ways, and see whence this visitation cometh. Have mercy upon all that are appointed to die, and grant that they omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with Thee, and that they may be delivered from death eternal. And God grant that we may apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, while we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### NOON.

1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*

Acts xvii. 26. "For we are all of one blood." And Charity, that more excellent way, is a tender affection for the whole creation of God.

O God, almighty and merciful, let thy fatherly kindness be upon all whom thou hast made. Hear the prayers of all that call upon Thee; open the eyes of them that never pray for themselves; pity the sighs of such as are in misery; deal mercifully with them that are in darkness: and increase the number of the graces of such as fear and serve Thee daily. Preserve this land from the misfortunes of war; thy church from all dangerous errors; this people from forgetting Thee, their Lord and benefactor. Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence, or persecution. Bless all persons and places to which thy providence has made me a debtor; all who have been instrumental to my good by their assistance, advice, or example: and make me in my turn useful to others. Let none of those that desire my prayers want thy mercy; but defend, and comfort, and conduct them through, to their lives' end.

"In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus, concerning you."

Cause us, O God, to profit by all the visitations of thy grace and mercy.

"It becometh well the just to be thankful."

O Lord and Father, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, which thou hast showed thy servant, neither can I render due thanks and praise for them; but, O Lord, accept of this my sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

For all the known, and for all the unobserved favors, deliverances, visitations, opportunities of doing good, chastisements, and graces of thy Holy Spirit, vouchsafed to me, I bless thy good providence; beseeching thee to pardon my ingratitude, that I have passed so many days and years without observing, and without acknowledging, thy great goodness to thy unworthy servant.

For when I soberly consider my dependance upon Thee, for my life, welfare, health of body, peace of mind, grace, comfort, and salvation, I ought to be very thankful.

Glory be to God, my Creator; glory be to Jesus,

my Redeemer; glory be to the Holy Ghost, my sanctifier, my Guide, and Comforter: all love, all glory, be to God most high. Amen.

Let us never ascribe any thing to ourselves, but all to the grace of God, and render to him all the glory of his works.

Preserve me, O God, from the insensibility of those who receive thy favors without being affected with them, and from the ingratitude of those who look upon them as a debt.

Psal. xc. 1, 2. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord; and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High! To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning: and thy faithfulness every night."

Many and great have been the favors and blessings which Thou hast bestowed on this nation; for which, O Lord, in conjunction with those who praise Thee for them, and in the stead of those who forget to praise Thee, I bless and praise thy holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

*Our Father which art in Heaven.*

Acts xvii. 28. "In Thee we live and move and have our being."

Grant that we may love Thee with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

Blessed be God, who dealeth with us with the tenderness of a father.

O that we may remember that our Father and our inheritance is in heaven!

I commit myself, and all that belongs to me, to thy fatherly care and love.

*Verily*, whatever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give to you.\* This is the great support and comfort of sinners. Hear us, for thy Son's sake; for as sinners we have no right to ask any favor.

What manner of love is it, that we should be called the sons of God!†

*Hallowed be thy name.*

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honor, and power, and glory, for Thou hast created all things."

"In this is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit."

May thy children have a great regard for every thing that belongs to Thee.

May I never dishonor Thee, O Heavenly Father, by word or deed.

May I glorify Thee daily by a good life. Fill my heart with a great concern and zeal for thy glory."

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord."

"They that honor me, I will also honor."

How little have I done to promote thy glory! God be merciful unto me.

*Thy kingdom come.*

May all the kingdoms of the world obey thy laws, and submit to thy providence, and become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

Bless the pious endeavors of all those who strive to propagate the gospel of thy kingdom.

Vouchsafe to reign in my heart; and let not Satan ever have dominion over me.

Fit us O God, for the coming of thy kingdom. May I submit and rejoice to be governed by Thee.

O that thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart; subdue in me all pride and covetousness, hatred, malice, envy, lust, and all uncleanness, and whatever shall offend Thee.

*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

1 Thess. iv. 3. "This is the will of God, even our sanctification."

Thou hast sent us into the world, not to do our own will, but thine.

\* John xvi 23.

† John iii. 1.

O subject my will to thine.  
May thy name be honored by the good lives of  
Christians.

O that I may have respect unto all thy commands.  
May thy will revealed to us in thy holy word, be the  
rule of my will, of my desires, my words, life, and  
actions.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

John vi. 27. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

Lord, give us evermore this bread. Give us the  
necessaries of life; but above all, the bread that nourisheth to eternal life.

*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Luke vi. 37. "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

Grant O Heavenly Father, that I may close with this  
merciful condition of pardon.

Thou hast been all mercy to me, O God, grant that  
I may be so to all others.

Blessed be the Lord, who hast put our salvation into  
our own hands. May thy grace, O Father, give me  
an heart ever ready to forgive.

*And lead us not into temptation.*

1 Cor. x. 13. "Let him that thinketh he standeth  
(firm) take heed lest he fall."

Let not any confidence in ourselves provoke Thee,  
O God, to leave us to ourselves.

2 Pet. ii. 9. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver  
the godly out of temptation."

Thou O Father, knowest my infirmities, and the  
power of my enemies; be not wanting to me in the  
hour of temptation.

Matt. xxvi. 41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not  
into temptation."

Make me mindful of my weakness, that I may be  
more watchful and importune for grace.

Fortify my soul against the temptations of the world,  
the flesh, and the devil, for Jesus Christ's sake.

*But deliver us from evil.*

1 Pet. v. 8. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your  
adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about,  
seeking whom he may devour."

Grant, O Heavenly Father, that this adversary may  
never find me off my guard, or from under thy protection.

In all my saving trials, give me grace and power to  
overcome to thy glory.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.*

To Thee, to Thee alone, and to thy Son, and Holy  
Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

#### EVENING.

Psal. cxli. 2. *Let my prayers be set forth in thy sight,  
as the incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be as  
an evening sacrifice.*

THAT it hath pleased God to add another day to the  
years of my life; that none of his judgments, to which  
for my sins I am liable, have fallen upon me; that by  
his grace he hath kept me from all scandalous sins, and  
from the dangers of an evil world; that he has given  
me occasions of doing good, and grace to make use of  
them; that he hath supplied me and my family with  
the necessities of this life, and with means of attain-  
ing a better:—Accept, O God, of my unfeigned thanks  
for these, and for all thy mercies from day to day be-  
stowed upon me. Add this to all my favors, I beseech  
Thee, that I may never forget to be thankful.

Possess my heart with such a deep sense of my  
obligations to and dependence upon Thee for life,

and health, and grace, and salvation, that religion,  
may be my delight, as well as my duty.

But that I may serve Thee with a quiet mind, for-  
give me the things whereof my conscience is afraid,  
and avert the judgments which I have justly de-  
served. Remember not the offences of my youth;  
and in mercy blot out those of my riper years. Pardon  
my sins of the day past, and of my life past, and  
grant that they may never rise up in judgment against  
me. Amen.

1 John ii. 1. "If any man sin, we have an ad-  
vocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,  
and he is the propitiation for our sins."

O most powerful advocate, I put my cause into thy  
hands, let thy blood and merits plead for me: and by  
thy mighty intercession, procure for me a full dis-  
charge of all my sins.

John v. 14. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing  
come unto thee."

Lord, the frailty of man without Thee cannot but  
fall. In all temptations, therefore, I beseech Thee to  
succor me, that no sin may ever get the dominion over  
me."

Psal. xci. 1. "Whoso dwelleth under the defence  
of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the  
Almighty."

May the Almighty God take me, my family, my re-  
lations, my friends, my benefactors, and my enemies,  
under his gracious protection; give his holy angels  
charge concerning us; preserve us from the prince  
and powers of darkness, and from the dangers of the  
night; and keep us in perpetual peace and safety:  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear me, O God, not according to my weak under-  
standing, but according to the full importance of that  
Holy Prayer, which Jesus Christ has taught us, and  
which I presume to offer:—

*"Our Father which art in heaven, &c."*

*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*

God will be glorified in the salvation of souls.

If the Almighty God were not my Father, I might  
expect vengeance instead of mercy.

May I show by my life that God is my father!

This earth is not the inheritance of the children of  
God.

Blessed be God, who dealeth not with us with the  
authority of a lord over his servants, but with the ten-  
derness of a father over his children.

*Thy kingdom come.*

I own Thee for my king; do Thou make and own  
me for thy faithful subject. Enlarge thy kingdom, for  
the honor of thy great name. May I preserve thy  
kingdom within me, the government of thy Spirit.  
Bring me into subjection to thyself, by thy grace.

*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

That thou mayest have a church on earth as obedi-  
ent to thy will as that is in heaven.

O Heavenly Father, subdue in me whatever is con-  
trary to thy holy will. Grant that I may ever study to  
know thy will, that I may know how to please Thee.

Thy will, O God, is the perfection of justice! let  
me never prescribe to Thee what thou oughtest to  
give me. What Thou wilt, we may be sure, is best  
for us; we cannot be sure of what we will for our-  
selves. Hearken not to the corrupt desires of my  
heart, but to the voice of thy own mercy.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

Yes, my God, I will have recourse to Thee daily;  
for on Thee I depend daily for life, and breath, and  
grace, and all things.

Give me a true understanding and love for thy  
Word, the bread which nourisheth to eternal life.



For Thou, O Lord, has taught us, not to seek that bread which perisheth, but that which endureth to eternal life.

*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

May I ever show mercy to men, that I may receive it from Thee, my God.

Do I value my soul, and think this too hard a condition?

Thou art all mercy to me; grant that I may be all merciful to my brethren, for thy sake, O Father.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

For thou knowest our infirmities, and the power and malice of our enemies.

Thou knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

Grant, O God, that I may never run into those temptations, which in my prayers I desire to avoid!

Vouchsafe me the gift of perseverance, on which my eternal happiness depends.

Lord, never permit my trials to be above my strength.

O Holy Spirit of Grace, be not wanting to me in the hour of temptation. And, in all temptations, give us power to resist and overcome. Leave us not in the power of evil spirits to ruin us. Support us under all our saving trials and troubles.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Let thy fatherly compassion grant what the Son of thy love has encouraged us to pray for.

By thy Almighty power, make good whatever is defective in me.

### EXAMINATION.

Eccles. xviii. 20. *Before judgment, examine thyself: and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy.*

Discover to me, O Thou searcher of hearts, whatever is amiss in me, whether in life or principle.

### DEATH.

From sudden, from unprepared death, good Lord, deliver me, my family, and all that desire my prayers. May we never be surprised in sin; and may thy mercy supply whatever shall be wanting in our preparation for death.

For myself, with the submission of a penitent sinner under the righteous sentence of death passed upon all mankind, I beg that I may so live, as that I may with joy resign my life to Thee, O Father, trusting in thy mercy and goodness, and promises in Jesus Christ, at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Amen.

Ephes. iv. 6. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Lord, grant, that I may lie down to sleep with the same charitable dispositions with which I desire and hope to die.

I beseech Thee for all that are my enemies, not for judgment and vengeance, but for mercy, for the remission of their sins, and for their eternal happiness.

Psal. xiii. 3. "Lighten my eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not in death."

Deliver me from the terrors of the night, and from the pestilence that walketh in darkness.

Let my sleep be free from sin; preserve me, O Lord, from evil dreams, and evil spirits.

Into thy hands I commend myself, my spirit, my soul, and body, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Grant that I may remember Thee upon my bed.

Psal. iv. 9. *I will lay me down in peace, and take*

*my rest; for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.*

May the Saviour and Guardian of my soul take me under his protection this night and evermore.

### SUNDAY MEDITATIONS.

#### PRAYERS, THANKSGIVINGS, &c.

#### *A Daily Form of Thanksgiving.*

O ALMIGHTY God, and most merciful Father, who day after day, dost minister to sinful man infinite occasions of praising Thee, accept of my unfeigned thanks for all the blessings I have and every day receive from thy good providence.

That of thine own mere goodness, and without any merit of mine, or of my forefathers, Thou hast given me a being from honest and religious parents, and in such a part of the world where the Christian religion is purely taught, and thy Sacraments duly administered.

That thou didst endue me with reason and perfect senses; and to make these more comfortable to me, didst give me a sound and healthful body.

That Thou hast given me an early knowledge of Thee, my Creator and Redeemer.

That Thou hast preserved me ever since my birth, and hast vouchsafed me health and liberty, and a competency of means to support me.

That Thou hast redeemed me by thy Son, and given me a share in his merits; sanctified me by thy Holy Spirit; and has heaped many favors upon me.

That Thou hast given me honest friends to admonish, to counsel, to encourage and to support me, by their interest and advice.

That Thou hast been my refuge in tribulation, and my defence in all adversities; delivering me from dangers, infamy, and troubles. For all known or unobserved deliverances, and for the guard thy holy angels keep over me, I praise thy good providence.

When I went astray, Thou didst bring me back; when I was sad, Thou didst comfort me; when I offended Thee, Thou didst forbear and gently correct me, and didst long expect my repentance; and when, for the grievousness of my sins, I was ready to despair, Thou didst keep me from utter ruin; Thou hast delivered me from the snares and assaults of the devil; Thou hast not only preserved my soul, but my body, from destruction, when sickness and infirmities took hold of me.

O Lord and Father, I cannot render due thanks and praise for all these mercies bestowed upon me: Such as I have I give Thee; and humbly beseech Thee to accept of this my daily sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Pardon, O God, all my former ingratitude; and that I have passed so many days without observing, without admiring, without acknowledging and confessing, thy wonderful goodness to the most unworthy of thy servants.

For (now I soberly consider my dependence upon Thee) as there is no hour of my life that I do not enjoy thy favors, and taste of thy goodness, so (if my frailty would permit) I would spend no part of my life without remembering Thee.

Praise the Lord, then, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his Holy name.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord, my Creator. Glory be to Thee, O Jesus, my Redeemer. Glory be to the Holy Ghost, my Sanctifier, my Guide, and Comforter.

All love, all glory, be to the high and undivided Trinity, whose works are inseparable, and whose dominion endureth world without end. Amen.

When I seriously consider, great God, my dependence upon thy Providence, and that the favors and mercies I have received are infinitely more in number than the acknowledgments I have made, I am justly

ashamed of my ingratitude, and afraid lest my unthankfulness should provoke Thee to hinder the current of thy blessings from descending upon me.

Forgive, O merciful Father, my past negligences, and Give me grace for the time to come to observe and to value thy kindness, as becomes one who has received so much more than he deserves.

Preserve in my soul, O God, such a constant and clear sense of my obligations to Thee, that upon the receipt of every favor, I may immediately turn my eyes to him from whom cometh my salvation. That my manifold blessings may fix such lasting impressions upon my soul, that I may always praise Thee faithfully here on earth, until it shall please Thee, of thy unbounded mercy, to call me nearer the place of thy heavenly habitation, to praise my Lord and deliverer to all eternity.

#### PROVIDENCE.

God has more ways of providing for us, of helping us, than we can possibly imagine; it is infidelity to desire to confine him to our ways and methods.

Matt. viii. 25. "Lord, save us, we perish."

Nothing can better express our own inability, and our whole dependence upon God: two sure conditions of obtaining help.

Since thy mercy, O God, is ever ready to help all that call upon Thee in time of distress, let thy goodness answer my wants.

Keep me under the protection of thy good providence, and make me to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ.

The more destitute we are of human aid, the more ought we to trust to that providence which God is pleased to exert in extreme necessity.

O God, give me grace never to condemn thy providence; let me adore the wisdom of thy conduct, the holiness of thy ways, and the power of thy grace.

How many sins should we commit, if God did not vouchsafe to oppose our corrupt will! Blessed be his holy name, for not leaving me to my own choices.

Psal. xc. 12. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

#### BIRTH-DAY.

Blessed be God for my creation and birth: for giving me a being from honest parents fearing God, and in a Christian and Protestant country; for giving me perfect members and senses, a sound reason, and an healthful constitution—for the means of grace, the assistances of the Holy Spirit, and for the hopes of glory; for all the known or unobserved favors, providences, and deliverances, by which my life hath hitherto been preserved; most humbly beseeching Thee, my God and Father, to pardon my neglect or abuse of any of thy favors, and that I have so very much forgotten Thee, in whom I live and move, and have my being.

Good Lord, forgive me the great waste of my precious time; the many days and years of health, and the many opportunities of doing good, which I have lost; and give me grace, that for the time to come I may be truly wise, that I may consider my latter end, and work out my salvation with fear and trembling, ever remembering that *the night cometh when no man can work*; and that the day of my death may be better to me than the day of my birth.

O gracious God, grant that before Thou takest from me that breath which Thou gavest me, I may truly repent of the errors of my life past; that my sins may be forgiven, and my pardon sealed in heaven; so that I may have a place of rest in Paradise with thy faithful servants, till the general resurrection; when the good Lord vouchsafe me a better and an everlasting life, through Jesus Christ Amen.

#### NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Blessed be God, who has brought me safe to the beginning of another year.

Blessed be God, that I am of the number of those who have time and space for repentance yet given them.

My God, make me truly sensible of this mercy, and give me grace to consider often how short and how uncertain my time is; that there is one year more of a short life passed over my head; and that I am so much nearer eternity, that I may in good earnest think of another life, and be so prepared for it, as that death may not overtake me unawares.

Lord, pardon all my misspent time, and make me more diligent and careful to redeem it for the time to come, and when I come to the end of my days I may look back with comfort on the days that are past.

Grant that I may begin this new year with new resolutions of serving Thee more faithfully; and if, through infidelity or negligence, I forget these good purposes, the good Lord awaken in me a sense of my danger.

My heart is in thy hands, O God, as well as my time; O make me wise unto salvation; that I may consider in this my day the things that belong unto my peace; and that I may pass this, and all the years I have yet to live, in the comfortable hope of a blessed eternity, for the Lord Jesus' sake. Amen.

#### LORD'S-DAY.

Amos viii. 4. "When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell wheat?"

Deliver us, gracious God, from this sin of covetousness; from being weary of thy sabbaths, which are ordained to preserve in our hearts the knowledge of Thee, and of thy Son Jesus Christ.

O that we may desire and rejoice in the return of this day, and serve Thee faithfully on it; and that we may enjoy an everlasting sabbath with thy saints, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

O that I may be glad, when they say unto me, Come, let us go to the house of God!

#### PRAYER FOR ALL MANKIND.

1 Tim. ii. 1. "I exhort, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."

O God, almighty and merciful, let thy fatherly goodness be upon all that Thou hast made.

Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics; and grant that none may deprive themselves of that happiness which Jesus Christ has purchased by his death.

Bless the pious endeavors of all those that strive to propagate the gospel of Christ; and may its saving truths be received in all the world!

Preserve thy Church in the midst of the dangers that surround it; purge it from all corruptions, and heal its divisions, that all Christian people may unite and love as becomes the disciples of Christ.

Grant that all bishops and pastors may be careful to observe the sacred rites committed to their trust: That godly discipline may be restored and countenanced:

That Christians may not content themselves with bare shadows of religion and piety, but endeavor after that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

That such as are in authority may govern with truth and justice; and that those whose duty it is to obey, may do it for conscience sake.

Let all that sincerely seek the truth, be led into it by the Holy Spirit; and to all such as are destitute of necessary instruction, vouchsafe a greater measure of thy grace.

Support and comfort all that labor under trials and afflictions, all that suffer wrongfully: and by thy mighty grace succor all those that are tempted.

Give unto all sinners a true sense of their unhappy state, and grace and strength to break their bonds.

Visit, with thy fatherly comforts, all such as are now in their last sickness, that they omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with Thee.



Be gracious to all those countries that are made desolate by the sword, famine, pestilence, or persecution. And sanctify the miseries of this life, to the everlasting benefit of all that suffer.

Preserve this land from the miseries of war; this church from persecution, and from all wild and dangerous errors; and this people from forgetting Thee, their Lord and Benefactor.

Avert the judgments which we have justly deserved; and mercifully prevent the ruin that threatens us; and grant that we may be ever prepared for what thy Providence shall bring forth.

Bless all persons and places to which thy Providence has made me a debtor; all who have been instrumental to my good, by their assistance, advice, or example; and make me in return useful to others.

Let none of those who cannot pray for themselves, and desire my prayers, want thy mercy; but defend, and comfort, and conduct them through this dangerous world, that we may meet in paradise, to praise our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Enlighten the minds and pardon the sin of all that err through simplicity.

Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but guide Thou the just.

Relieve and comfort all that are troubled in mind or conscience;—all that are in danger of falling into despair;—all that are in dangerous error;—all that are in prison, in slavery, or under persecution for a righteous cause;—all that are in any distress whatever, that all may improve under their sufferings.

Have mercy upon and reclaim all that are engaged in sinful courses, in youthful lusts, in unchristian quarrels, and in unrighteous lawsuits.

Direct all that are in doubt, all that seek the truth.

O God the Creator and Redeemer of all, have mercy upon all whom thou hast made and redeemed. Amen.

## MONDAY MEDITATIONS.

### RESIGNATION.

Luke xxii. 42. *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*

O God, who takest delight in helping the afflicted, help a soul too often distressed with an inward rebellion against thy just appointments.

Who am I, that I should make exceptions against the will of God, infinitely *great, wise, and good*!

I know not the things that are for my own good.

My most earnest desires, if granted, may prove my ruin.

The things I complain of and fear, may be the effects of the greatest mercy.

The disappointments I meet with may be absolutely necessary for my eternal welfare.

I do therefore protest against the sin and madness of desiring to have *my will* done, and not the *will of God*.

Grant gracious Father, that I may never dispute the reasonableness of thy will, but ever close with it, as the best that can happen.

Prepare me always for what thy providence shall bring forth.

Let me never murmur, be *dejected*, or *impatient*, under any of the troubles of this life; but ever find rest and comfort in *this*, *THIS IS THE WILL OF MY FATHER, AND OF MY GOD*: grant this for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

To the glory of God, and justification of his infinite good, I do here acknowledge, that in all the dispensations of providence which have befallen me *to this day*, however uneasy to flesh and blood, I have notwithstanding, experienced the kindness of a father for his child; and am convinced, that it would have been much worse for me had I had my own choices.

O God, grant that for the time to come I may yield a cheerful obedience to all thy appointments. Amen.

Corrupt nature cannot comprehend that afflictions are the effects of the divine love. It must be thy grace, O Lover of Souls, which must work in me this conviction, which I beseech Thee to vouchsafe me.

Never set a greater value upon this world than it deserves.

If a man be not eager or positive in his desires, he will more readily embrace the appointments of Providence.

If we place our hopes, or our dependence upon the *power*, the *wisdom*, the *counsel*, or the *interest*, we have in man, and not in God only, we shall surely be disappointed.

Job xiii. 15. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

O my crucified King and Saviour, let my submission to whatever afflictions shall befall me, for thy sake, or by thy appointment, be to me a pledge and an assurance of my fidelity to Thee, and conformity to thy sufferings.

It is a favor to be punished and to suffer in this life, when a man makes a good use of his sufferings. But to suffer by constraint, is to suffer without comfort and without benefit.

Our union and conformity with the will of God ought to be instead of all consolation.

Grant, O God, that I may always accept of the punishment of my sins with resignation to thy good pleasure.

Remember me, O Lord, in the day of trouble; keep me from all excess of fear, concern, and sadness.

Grant me an humble and resigned heart, that with perfect content I may ever acquiesce in all the methods of thy grace, that I may never frustrate the designs of thy mercy, by unreasonable fears, by sloth, or self-love. Amen.

Think often of God, and of his attributes, his mercy, compassion, fidelity, fatherly care, goodness, protection. Dwell on these thoughts till they produce such a well-grounded confidence as will support us under all difficulties, and assure us that he cannot possibly forsake those that depend on him.

When God deprives us of any thing that is most dear to us; health, ease, conveniences of life, friends, wife, children, &c.—we should immediately say, *This is God's will*; I am by him commanded to part with so much; let me not therefore murmur or be dejected, for then it would appear that I did love that thing more than God's will.

When God thus visits us, let us immediately look inwards; and lest our sins should be the occasion, let us take care that we seriously repent, and endeavor to make our peace with God: and then he will either deliver or support us, and will convince us, that we suffer in justice for our faults; or for our trial, and to humble us; for God's glory, and to sanctify us.

1 Pet. v. 5. "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

Give me grace, O God, to study, to love, to adore, and to imitate that humility, which thy blessed Son hath taught us both by his word and by his most holy example.

### BUSINESS.

Ephes. v. 17. "Understanding what the will of the Lord is."

To engage in any business of importance without knowing this, and taking counsel of God, may cost us dear.

Isaiah xxx. 1. "Wo to them that take counsel, but not of me, saith the Lord."

But then, let a man take heed, that when he goes to inquire of the Lord, he does not set up idols in his own heart, lest God answer him according to his idols.

We are to pray for the direction of God's Spirit, upon all great occasions; especially, we are humbly

to depend on his direction, and cheerfully to expect it, which he will manifest, either by some plain event of his providence, or by suggesting such reasons as ought to determine the will to a wise choice.

But to follow the inclinations of the will without reason, only because we find ourselves strongly inclined to this or that, is a very dangerous way, and may engage us in ver<sup>y</sup> dangerous practices.

MASTER. SERVANT.

Death, in a very little time, may make the master and the servant equal. Let us anticipate this equality, by treating our servants with compassion; having respect to Christ in the person of our servant; to Christ, who took upon him the form of a servant for our sakes.

## TUESDAY MEDITATIONS.

TROUBLE, PERSECUTION, AFFLICTIONS, &c.

Psal. l. 15. *Call upon me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.*

O God, who seest all our weakness, and the troubles we labor under, have regard unto the prayers of thy servant, who stands in need of thy *comfort*, thy *direction*, and thy *help*.

Grant that I may suffer like a Christian, and not grieve like an unbeliever;—that I may receive troubles as a punishment due to my past offences; as an exercise of my faith, and patience, and humility; and as a trial of my obedience;—and that I may improve all my afflictions, to the good of my soul, and thy glory.

Thou alone knowest what is best for us; Let me never dispute thy wisdom or thy goodness.

Direct my reason, subdue my passions, put a stop to my roving thoughts and fears, and let me have the comfort of thy promise, and of thy protection, both now and ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Heb. xii. 7. "If ye endure chastening, God deal-eth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."

Micah vii. 9. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him."

If I am despised or slighted, I ought to consider it as a favor, since this is a mark of God's children; and therefore I ought to thank him for it, and not be angry with those whom he makes his instruments to subdue and mortify my pride.

1 Pet. iv. 13. "Rejoice, in as much as ye are made partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy; viz. because your reward will be proportionable to your sufferings."

Matt. v. 11, 12. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The mystery of the cross is to be learned under the cross.

Matt. x. 28, 29, 30. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

1 Pet. v. 6, 7. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, (under great afflictions which he suffers to befall you,) that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you"

Matt. vi. 10. "Thy will be done."

It is just, Great God, it should be so; for who shall govern the world but he that made it? And yet we poor creatures repine, when any thing crosses our hopes or designs. What strange unthoughtfulness! what presumption is this! And it is thy great mercy that any one of us are sensible of this folly, and become willing to be governed by Thee.

With all my heart and soul, O God, I thank Thee, that in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, I can look up to Thee, and cheerfully resign my will to thine.

It is the desire of my soul, and my humble petition, that I may always be ready and willing to submit to thy providence, that thou mayest order what thou judgest to be most convenient for me.

I have trusted Thee, O Father, with myself; my soul is in thy hand, which I verily believe Thou wilt preserve to eternal happiness; my body, and all that belongs to it, are of much less value. I do, therefore, with as great security and satisfaction, trust all I have to Thee; hoping thou wilt preserve me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable to my salvation.

I will love Thee, O God; being satisfied that all things, however strange and irksome they appear, shall work together for good to those that do so.

I know in whom I have believed; I have a Saviour at thy right hand, full of kindness, full of care, full of power; he has prayed for me, that this faith fail me not; and by this faith I am persuaded, that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death which I may fear, nor life which I may hope for, nor things present which I feel, nor things to come which I may apprehend, shall ever prevail so far over me, as to make me not to resign my will entirely to Thee.

In an humble, quiet, and dutiful submission, let me faithfully run the race that is set before me, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, despised the shame, endured the cross, and is now seated at the right hand of God; to whom I most humbly beseech Thee to bring me in thy good time; and for whatever shall fall out in the mean while, *Thy will be done.* Amen.

LOOK UNTO JESUS.

He was despised and rejected of men;—his life was sought for by Herod;—He was tempted by Satan;—hated by the world which he came to save;—set at nought by his own people;—called a deceiver, and a dealer with the devil;—was driven from place to place, and had not where to lay his head;—betrayed by one disciple, and forsaken by all the rest;—falsely accused, spit upon, and scourged;—set at nought by Herod and his men of war;—given up by Pilate to the will of his enemies;—and a murderer preferred before him;—was condemned to a most cruel and shameful death;—crucified between two thieves;—reviled in the midst of his torments;—then had gall and vinegar given him to drink; suffered a most bitter death, submitting with patience to the will of his Father.

O Jesus, who now sittest at the right hand of God, to succor all who suffer in a righteous way: be Thou my Advocate for grace, that in all my sufferings, I may follow thy example, and run with patience the race that is set before me. Amen.

Take all things that befall you as coming from God's providence, for your particular profit. And though they are evil in themselves, yet as he *permits*, or does not think fit to *hinder* them, they may be referred to him.

God no sooner discovers in your heart an ardent desire of well-doing, and of submitting to his will, but he *prepares* for you occasions of trying your virtue; and therefore, confident of his love, receive cheerfully a medicine prepared by



not be mistaken, and cannot give you any thing but what will be for your good.—See Eccles. chap. ii.

Lord, prepare my heart, that no afflictions may ever so surprise, as to overbear me.

Dispose me at all times to a readiness to suffer what thy providence shall order or permit.

It is the same cup which Jesus Christ drank of; it is he sends it. He sees it absolutely necessary that I must be first partaker of his sufferings, and then of his glory.

Matt. x. 22. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure to the end shall be saved."

It is indeed grievous to nature to be thus treated; but when it is for thy name's sake, O Jesus, and for the sake of thy truth, and for being true to Thee; how lovely is this trial, and how advantageous, when salvation is the reward!

Matt. x. 24. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord."

He who keeps this saying in his heart, will never complain of what he suffers, nor seek for any other way to save himself but by humiliation and the Cross.

#### SUFFERING.

O Lord, grant that whenever I suffer it may be for being faithful to Thee, and without drawing it unseasonably upon myself.

We are in God's hands; we often take ourselves out of his hands, by trusting to the help and protection of men, more than that of God.

God can render none miserable but those whom he finds sinners. Let us apply this to ourselves when in affliction, but not unto others, or to their personal faults.

Rev. iii. 19. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent."

Blessed be God, who vouchsafes, by salutary chastisements, to awaken us when we fall asleep through sloth and lukewarmness.

Grant O God, that I may never murmur at thy appointments, nor be exasperated at the ministers of thy providence.

In Thee, O Jesus, we find matter of consolation in every affliction that can possibly befall us.

All visitations are from God. He is not delighted with the miseries of his poor creatures; afflictions are therefore designed for our good. He will either show us the reason of his visitation, or make us reap the fruits of it."

People that may be well disposed, may yet live under the power of some evil custom, which is displeasing to God;—a man may have been guilty of some great sin which he has yet never truly repented of, or been truly humbled for. This was the case of the sons of Jacob;—they had attempted the life of, and afterwards sold, their brother, and endangered the life of their aged father; under which guilt they passed their life well enough for many years, till God visited them; and then they thought of their sin, confessed, and repented.

God, by afflictions, often fits us for greater degrees of grace which he is going to bestow.

Though I suffer, yet I am well, because I am what God would have me to be.

Lord, do not permit my trials to be above my strength; and do Thou vouchsafe to be my strength and comfort in the time of trial.

Give me grace to take in good part whatever shall befall me; and let my heart acknowledge it to be the Lord's doing, and to come from thy providence, and not by chance.

God makes use of afflictions—sometimes by way of prevention; *lest I should be exalted*, said St. Paul;—"To reform them; *before I was afflicted, I went astray*;†

To perfect them; patience, courage, submission to the will of God, are graces not so much as understood by people who meet with no adversaries; *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*;—"To prove men, and show them for examples; if a man had no enemies, how could he show his charity in forgiving them?"

John xi. 5. Afflictions are no marks of God's displeasure. *Jesus loved Mary and Lazarus*, yet they were both afflicted.

Punishment is due to sin. We must be punished here or hereafter;—it is the cause of all afflictions, and designed by our gracious God to bring us to repentance.

Prosperity is a most dangerous state: we fancy it is owing to our merit, and it is followed with pride, neglect of duty, fearlessness.

It is happy for us when God counts us worthy to suffer for his name's sake.

Afflictions, undergone with resignation, are a great test of our love of God; when we love him, then he chastens us. May God sanctify all our afflictions to us all.

May I receive every thing from thy hand with patience and with joy.

Remember me, O God, in the day of trouble. Secure me by thy grace, from all excess of *fear, concern, and sadness*.

Let the afflictions I meet with be in some measure serviceable towards the appeasing of thy wrath. Let 'em prove the happy occasion of forwarding my conversion and salvation.

#### TEMPTATION

We are exposed to temptation all our days. Men are never more dangerously tempted, than when they think themselves secure from temptations. This is a proof of the power the devil has over them. We tempt God when we expose ourselves unnecessarily to dangers, through a false confidence of his assistance.

#### HOPE.

Grant O God, that, amidst all the discouragements, difficulties, dangers, distress, and darkness of this mortal life, I may depend upon thy mercy, and on this build my hopes, as on a sure foundation.

Let thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus deliver me from despair, both now and at the hour of my death.

#### RESIGNATION.

Grant that I may receive the punishment of my sins with patience and resignation.

#### INJURIES. PERSECUTION.

Give me, O, God, an heart to consider, that man could have no power against me, unless it were given from above.

#### ENEMIES.

A Christian should not discover that he has enemies any other way than by doing more good to them than to others. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink.* He will therefore be careful not to lose such occasions.

O Jesus! whose charity all the malice of thy bitterest enemies could not overcome, shed abroad in my heart that most excellent gift of charity; the very bond of peace, and of all virtues.

Eccles. viii. 7. "Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy being dead; but remember that we die all."

Our enemies are our benefactors, procuring for us a new right to heaven.

I pray God convert all those who hate us without a cause.

I beseech Thee for my enemies, not for vengeance

\* 2 Cor. xii. &c.

† Psalm cxix.

\* Acts xiv. 22.

but for mercy; that thou wouldst change their hearts by thy grace, or restrain their malice by thy power.

## IN TIME OF WAR.

O Sovereign Lord! who for our sins art justly displeased, I prostrate myself before Thee, confessing my own sin and the sin of this people; acknowledging the justice of any scourge which Thou shalt think fit to bring upon us; and trembling to think how much I may have contributed towards it.

Thou hast already spoken to us, both by thy judgments and mercies, both by the scarcity and plenty of bread, and we have not regarded it. Thou hast taken away the lives of many, very many, in their very sins, by which numerous widows and fatherless children have been left miserable.

The sins of *licentiousness and drunkenness, of swearing, lying, and perjury; of lechuousness, injustice, and defrauding the public;* are made light of.

The sins of *impiety, of profaneness; of despising the means of grace and salvation,* are too common amongst us.

What shall we say to prevail with God to avert the judgments which these sins deserve?

God be merciful unto us, and put a stop to this torrent of wickedness, put thy fear into all our hearts, that we may return to Thee; that we may repent, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance; and that iniquity may not be our ruin.

May the dread of thy now threatened judgments deter us from evil;—may thy goodness and patience lead us to repentance;—weaken the power of Satan;—take from among us the spirit of slumber, of ignorance, and inconsideration.

Let every one of us see and feel the plague of his own heart, and say, *what have I done to bring these evils upon us?* So that bringing forth fruits answerable to amendment of life, we may escape the judgment now hanging over us; and above all, thy judgment against sinners in the world to come. And this I beg for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

## JUDGMENT DAY.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be of the number of those that shall find mercy at that day.

## ZACCHÆUS.

The good Lord grant that I may give a proof of the sincerity of my conversion by a change of life.

## WEDNESDAY MEDITATIONS.

## COVETOUSNESS. FASTINGS. DIFFICULTIES. SELF-DENIAL.

Matt. iv. 9, 10. *All these things will I give thee.—Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

GREAT and glorious God, who alone art worthy of our love and service, cure me of, and preserve me from, the sin and vanity of admiring this world.

Give me grace to renounce all covetous desires, all love of riches, and pleasures;—to desire only what is necessary, and to be content with what Thou, O Lord, thinkest so.

Not to be troubled at the loss or want of any thing besides thy favor:

That no business, no pleasures, may divert me from the thoughts of the world to come:

That I may cheerfully part with all these things, when thou requirest it of me.

And that I may be ever prepared to do so, dispose me to a temperance in all things, and to lay up my treasures in heaven for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Luke vi. 24. "Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation."

A man must have but little faith, who can read these words, and yet love riches, and the pleasures they afford.

Lord, grant that I may resist every temptation to the love of creatures; lest they steal my heart from Thee, my God, whom I desire to love with all my soul.

I know that I must in a great measure renounce all other objects of my affection, in order to love Thee with all my heart. Lord, give me grace and strength to put this in practice.

1 John ii. 15, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Grant, O God, that I may never hope to reconcile two things so inconsistent as the love of Thee and the world.

Matt. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

To be poor in spirit—is to be disengaged from wealth, to look upon it as a burthen or a trust.

1 Tim. vi. 8. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

And yet even the Christian world is not content without superfluities and excess. These disorders are not less criminal, because so common.

Give me, O God, the eyes of faith, that I may see the world just as it is;—the vanity of its promises, the folly of its pleasures, the unprofitableness of its rewards, the multitude of its snares, and the dangers of its temptations.

## FASTING.

Jesus Christ spared not his innocent flesh, but fasted; the sinner cherisheth his continually, refusing it nothing.

Fasting is in some sense a punishment, a remedy for present temptations, and a preservative against future.

Psal. cii. 4. "My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread."

The humble and afflicted soul is not much concerned to please the appetite.

Luke vi. 25. "Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger;" that is, Ye whose daily meals are feasts, who make profession of a life of sensuality, who know not what it is to fast; wo to such Christians!

If we judge ourselves with severity, we shall be judged with mercy.

## IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

Psal. xxxix. 11 "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth."

O merciful God, who in thy wise providence dost so order even natural events, that they serve both for the good of the universe, and for the conviction of particular sinners, so that men shall have reason to acknowledge thy glorious attributes;—I do with great sorrow of heart, but with all submission to thy good pleasure, confess thy mercy as well as justice to me in the judgments, afflictions, sorrows of this day.

I acknowledge thy voice, O merciful God; I acknowledge my own transgressions, which have provoked Thee to speak to me after this manner, and at this very time.

O Lord, give me true repentance for all the errors of my life, and particularly for that which was, in all probability, the occasion of this affliction.

Blessed be God, that my punishment was not as great as my crime.

Blessed be God, that he has given me time to repent of the sin that provoked him to deal with me after this manner.

Blessed be God, that when he spake to me once, yea twice, that I regarded it at last.

Good God of mercy, give me grace that I may not



provoke Thee any more to repeat this word to me, but that I may faithfully perform those vows which are upon me. This I cannot do without thy gracious assistance, which I most humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe me, for Jesus Christ's sake, who by his merits has purchased this grace for all that faithfully ask it of Thee; for his sake, O merciful God, grant me this grace. Amen.

I do in all humility accept of the punishment of mine iniquities.

I will hold my peace, and not open my mouth, because it is thy doing and my deservings.

I know, O Lord, that it is good for me to be in trouble, or thou wouldst not suffer it to be so.

Let thy merciful kindness be my comfort according to thy promise to all that love and serve Thee.

#### DIFFICULTIES.

We are to pray for the particular direction of God's Holy Spirit upon all great occasions; we are humbly to depend upon, and cheerfully to expect it.

#### IN A LAWSUIT.

Convince me, O God, if I am under any mistake in this affair.

Direct, assist, and support me under all the difficulties I shall meet with.

Put an happy end, in thy good time, to this troublesome controversy.

Dispose the hearts of those with whom we have to do, to peace and justice.

Give me grace to rest satisfied with whatever shall be the issue, believing assuredly, that God can make good any loss I may sustain, or sanctify it to my eternal welfare.

Lord, in this, and in all other things I undertake, Thy will be done, and not mine.

O manifest thy will to me, preserve me from evil counsels, and from rash enterprises.

#### FAITH.

Grant, O God, that I may with humility receive, and with perseverance hold fast, all those truths which Thou hast revealed.

I thank Thee, O God, for thy Holy Word, and for that Thou hast not left us, in the affairs of eternity, to the uncertainty of our own reason and judgment.

Defend me against all delusions of error; the snares of wit and learning; the raileries of profane men; and from deserting the truth. Grant, O God, that neither education, interest, prejudice, or passion, may ever hinder me from discerning the truth.

Open the eyes of all that are in error; heal the wounds of the divided church; that we may be one fold under one shepherd. Amen.

John xvi. 13. "The Holy Spirit shall guide you into all truth."

O Holy Spirit, make me to understand, embrace, and love the truths of the gospel.

Give, O God, thy blessing unto thy word, that it may become effectual to my conversion and salvation, and to the salvation of all that read and hear it.

Give me grace to read thy Holy Word with reverence and respect, becoming the gracious manifestation of thy will to men; submitting my understanding and will to thine.

Let thy gracious promises, O God, contained in thy word, quicken my obedience. Let thy dreadful threatenings and judgments upon sinners frighten me from sin, and oblige me to a speedy repentance, for Jesus Christ his sake.

Cause me, O God, to believe thy word, to obey thy commands, to fear thy judgments, and to hope in, and depend upon, thy gracious promises, contained in thy Holy Word, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Give me a full persuasion of those great truths which Thou hast revealed in thy Holy Word.

The gospel will not be a means of salvation to him who reads, or hears it only, but to him who reads, loves, remembers, and practises it by a lively faith.

Cause me, O God, rightly to understand, and constantly to walk in, the way of thy commandments.

Grant us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting, for Jesus Christ's sake.

From hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word, good Lord, deliver us.

Give us grace to hear meekly thy word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of thy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy Holy Word. Amen.

#### SELF-DENIAL.

Eccles. xix. 5. "He that resisteth pleasure crowneth his life."

Vouchsafe me, gracious God, the graces of mortification and self-denial, that my affections and flesh being subdued unto the spirit, and my heart and all my members being mortified from all carnal and worldly lusts, I may ever obey thy blessed will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All mankind being under the sentence of death, certain to be executed, and at an hour we know not of; a state of repentance and self-denial, of being dead and crucified to the world, is certainly the most suitable, the most becoming temper that we can be found in, when that sentence comes to be executed; that is, when we come to die:—Especially when we consider, that this short and uncertain time, allowed us betwixt the sentence and execution, will determine our condition for eternity.

If this be the case of fallen man, as most certainly it is, then thoughtless unremitting pleasure is the greatest indecency;—a fondness of the world, the greatest folly;—and self-indulgence, downright madness.

And consequently, the contrary to these, namely, a constant seriousness of temper, an universal care and exactness of life, and indifference for the world, self-denial, sobriety, and watchfulness, must be our greatest wisdom.

And this discovers to us the reason and the necessity of all the duties of Christianity, and of God's dealings with fallen man in this state of trial.

For instance:—Jesus Christ commands us to *deny ourselves*, and to take up our cross daily, not because he can command what he pleases, (for he is infinite goodness, and can command nothing but what is good for his creatures,) but because the corruption of our nature requires that we should be forbidden every thing which should increase our disorder.

And because this disorder has spread itself through all the powers of our souls and bodies, and inclines to evil continually, he requires that our self-denial should reach as far as our corruption.

He commands us, therefore, to deny our own wisdom, because we are really blind as to what concerns our own true good, and should infallibly ruin ourselves, if left to our own choices.

He commands us to deny our *appetites*, because intemperance would ruin us.

He forbids us to give way to our *passions*; because a thousand evils will follow, if we should do so.

He obliges us to keep a very strict watch over our hearts; because from thence proceed hypocrisy, covetousness, malice, and many other evils.

We are forbid to set our hearts upon the world, and every thing in it, because our eternal happiness depends upon our loving God with all our heart and soul.

We are obliged to love our neighbor, and our very enemies, and are forbid to hate, to contend with, to hurt, to go to law with him, because this would exasperate our minds, and grieve the Holy Spirit of

God, by which we are sanctified; being against that charity which God delights in.

We are forbid all repining when God afflicts us, because, as sinners, suffering is due to us. And because our bodies have a very great influence over our souls, we are commanded to *fast*, and to be strictly temperate at all times, and to deny ourselves the love of sensual pleasures and self-indulgence.

We are commanded to deny all the ways of folly, vanity, and false satisfactions, that we may be able to take satisfaction and pleasure in the ways of God.

In short;—in whatever instances we are commanded to deny ourselves, it is because it is absolutely necessary, either to cure our corruption, or to qualify us for the grace of God, or to hinder us from grieving God's Holy Spirit, and forcing him to forsake us.

The more we deny ourselves, the freer we shall be from sin, and the more dear to God.

God appoints us to sufferings, that we may keep close to Him; and that we may value the sufferings of his Son, which we should have but a low notion of, did not our own experience teach us what it is to suffer.

They that deny themselves will be sure to find their strength increased, their affections raised; and their inward peace continually advanced.

I Tim. vi. 8. "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content."

Let us not imagine that excess, luxury, and superfluity, and the love of pleasures, are less criminal, because they are so common.

#### TAKE UP THE CROSS.

This is designed as a peculiar favor to Christians, as indeed are all Christ's commands. Miseries are the unavoidable portion of fallen man. All the difference is, Christians suffering in obedience to the will of God, it makes them easy; unbelievers suffer the same things, but with an uneasy will and mind.

To follow our own will, our passion, and our sense, is that which makes us miserable. It is for this reason, and that we have a remedy for all our evils, that Jesus Christ obliges us to submit our will, our passions, &c. to God.

The good Christian is not one who has no inclination to sin, (for we have all the seed of sin in us;) but who, being sensible of such inclinations, denieth them continually, and suffers them not to grow into evil actions.

Every day deny yourself some satisfaction; your *eyes*, objects of mere curiosity;—your *tongue*, every thing that may feed vanity, or vent enmity;—the *palate*, dainties;—the *ears*, flattery, and whatever corrupts the heart;—the *body*, ease and luxury;—bearing all the inconveniences of life, (for the love of God,) cold, hunger, restless nights, ill health, unwelcome news, the faults of servants, contempt, ingratitude of friends, malice of enemies, calumnies, our own failings, lowness of spirits, the struggle in overcoming our corruptions; bearing all these with patience and resignation to the will of God. *Do all this as unto God, with the greatest privacy.*

All ways are indifferent to one who has heaven in his eye, as a traveller does not choose the pleasantest, but the shortest and safest way to his journey's end; and that is, the way of the cross, which Jesus Christ made choice of, and sanctified it to all his followers.

Matt. viii. 20. "The Son of Man has not where to lay his head."

This should fill us with confusion, whenever we are overmuch concerned for the conveniences of life.

Our affections being very strongly inclined to sensible good, for the sake of which we are often tempted to evil, and fall into great disorders, we should

resolve to sacrifice our will to reason, and reason to the will of God.

God does not require it of us, that we should not feel any uneasiness under the cross, but that we should strive to overcome it by his grace.

#### VIRTUES OF AN HOLY LIFE.

Fervency in devotion;—frequency in prayer;—aspiring after the love of God continually;—striving to get above the world and the body; loving silence and solitude, as far as one's condition will permit; humble and affable to all;—patient in suffering affronts and contradictions;—glad of occasions of doing good even to enemies; doing the will of God, and promoting his honor to the uttermost of one's power;—resolving never to offend him willingly, for any temporal *pleasure, profit, or loss*. These are virtues highly pleasing to God.

Self-denial does not consist in fasting and other mortifications only, but in an *indifference for the world, its profits, pleasures, honors, and its other idols*.

It is necessary that we deny ourselves in little and indifferent things, when reason and conscience, which is the voice of God, suggests it to us, as ever we hope to get the rule over our own will.

Say not, it is a trifle, and not fit to make a sacrifice of to God. He that will not sacrifice a little affection, will hardly offer a greater. It is not the thing, but the reason and manner of doing it; namely, for God's sake, and that I may accustom myself to obey his voice, that God regards, and rewards with greater degrees of grace.

The greater your self-denial, the firmer your faith, and more acceptable to God. The sincere devotion of the rich, the alms of the poor, the humility of the great, the faith of such whose condition is desperate, the contemning the world when one can command it at pleasure, continuing instant in prayer, even when we want the consolation we expected: These, and such-like instances of self-denial, God will greatly bless.

They who imagine that self-denial intrenches upon our liberty, do not know that it is this only that can make us free indeed, giving us the victory over ourselves, setting us free from the bondage of our corruption, enabling us to bear afflictions, (which will come one time or other,) to foresee them without amazement, enlightening the mind, sanctifying the will, and making us to slight those baubles which others so eagerly contend for.

*Mortification* consists in such a sparing use of the creatures, as may deaden our love for them, and make us more indifferent in the enjoyment of them. This lessens the weight of concupiscence which carries us to evil, and so make the grace of God more effectual to turn the balance of the will.\*

Carnal man cannot comprehend that God loves those whom he permits to suffer;—but faith teacheth us, that the cross is the gift of his love, the foundation of our hope, the mark of his children, and the title of an inheritance in heaven. But unless God sanctify it by his Spirit, it becomes an insupportable burthen, a subject of murmuring, and an occasion of sin.

He that loveth life (that is, is fond of it) for the sake of the pleasures and advantages it affords, will soon lose the love of heavenly things; the love of God, of his soul, and of the duty he owes to them: he hates it, who does not value it in comparison of eternal life, which he hopes for. A Christian gives proof of this by mortifying himself.

Those whom God loves, in order to an happy eternity, he weans from the pleasures of this present life.

*Temperance* consists in a sober use of all earthly



visible things, and in confining ourselves within the compass of what is necessary.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.

The Almighty God enable me to conquer the temptation of riches, and to get above the allurements of this present life!

Christian self-denial is, to resist and crucify in ourselves the spirit and inclinations of Adam—the flesh, its affections and lusts,—to die to our passions, in order to follow the motions of the Spirit.

FASTING.

Necessary to bring our hearts to a penitent, holy, and devout temper; and to perform the vows that are upon us.

By *fasting*, by *alms*, and by *prayers*, we dedicate our *bodies, goods, and souls*, to God in a particular manner.

### THURSDAY MEDITATIONS.

Ephes. iv. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

Ephes. v. 4. *Foolish talking, and jesting, are not convenient.*

PRESERVE me, O God, from a vain conversation. Give me grace never to be ashamed or afraid to speak of Thee, and of thy law.

Give me a lively sense of the value of religion, and make it the delight of my heart; that I may speak of it with judgment, seriousness, and affection, and at all seasonable times.

May that good Spirit, which appeared in the likeness of tongues of fire, warm my heart, and direct my thoughts.

Matth. xii. 34. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. How can ye, being evil, speak good things? By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Ps. cxli. 3. "Set a guard, O Lord, upon my mouth, and keep the door of my lips."

Ps. xxxvii. 30. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment."

Hearts truly touched with the love of God, will communicate light and heat to each other,—will speak honorably of God, of his perfections, his justice, goodness, wisdom, and power,—the excellency of his laws,—the pleasantness of his service,—the instances of his love,—the rewards he has promised to his friends, and the punishments he has prepared for his enemies.

Matth. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

1 Thess. v. 11. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another."

Heb. x. 14. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works."

And let us join a good life to our religious conversation; and never contradict our tongue by our deeds.

We always do good or harm to others by the manner of our conversation; we either confirm them in sin, or awaken them to piety.

It is too true that some evil passion or other, and to gratify our corruption, is the aim of most conversations. We love to speak of past troubles;—hated and ill-will make us take pleasure in relating the evil actions of our enemies. We compare, with some degree of pride, the advantages we have over others. We recount, with too sensible a plea-

sure, the worldly happiness we enjoy. This strengthens our passions, and increases our corruption. God grant that I may watch against a weakness which has such evil consequences.

May I never hear, never repeat with pleasure, such things as may dishonor God, hurt my own character, or injure my neighbor.

James iv. 11. "Speak not evil one of another."

Truly humility makes us see our own faults, without concerning ourselves with the faults of others.

AGAINST ANGER.

Eccles. vii. 9. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."

O Lord, who art a God ready to pardon, slow to anger, and of great kindness, remove far from me all occasions and effects of causeless and immoderate anger; all pride and prejudice, and too much concern for the things of this world: all intemperate speeches and indecent passions.

Give me, O God, a mild, a peaceable, a meek, and an humble spirit, that remembering my own infirmities, I may bear with those of others:—That I may think lowly of myself, and not be angry when others think lowly of me; that I may be patient towards all men; gentle and easy to be entreated. that God, for Christ's sake, may be so towards me. Amen.

Ephes. iv. 26. "Be angry, and sin not: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Prov. xix. 11. "The discretion of a man defereth his anger."

A soft answer turneth away strife.

Prov. xvi. 32. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Rom. xii. 20. "Be kindly affectioned one towards another."

Suppress the very beginnings of anger.

Do not use to indulge it even where there are real faults; but try the gentle way, which may probably succeed better, and to be sure with more ease by far.

Seldom do people vex us on purpose, and yet prejudice very often makes us think that they do.

A sense of one's own integrity will make one pass by injuries more easily.

Be not too much concerned to tell the injuries you have received.

Accustom yourselves to silence, if you would learn to govern your tongue.

Deliver me, O God, from all violent and sinful passions, and give me grace to stand against them.

Matth. v. 4. "Blessed are the meek."

Instruct me, Lord, in this Christian virtue; Thou who art the master and teacher of it.

FOR FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

Luke vi. 37. "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

O God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, show mercy to thy servant, in forcing my corrupt nature to be obedient to thy commands.

O God, who hast made it my everlasting interest, as well as my duty, to forgive my neighbor whatever wrong he hath done me; help me to overcome all the difficulties I have to struggle with, all pride, prejudice, and desire of rendering evil for evil, that I may not deprive my soul of that mercy which thine infinite goodness has offered to sinners.

James ii. 13. "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shown no mercy."

O blessed God, help me in this great concern, that I may never fall under thy wrath, for want of showing mercy to others; but grant, O blessed Je-

—that, in this I may be thy disciple indeed.—  
Amen.

## SLANDER.

Matth. xi. 19. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Whatever measure a good man takes, he will hardly escape the censures of the world; the best way is, not to be concerned at them.

It is an instance of humility silently to bear the calumnies which are raised against us, when they relate to ourselves only; but it is a duty of prudence and charity modestly to vindicate ourselves, when the honor of God and the church is concerned.—Both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were slandered: who then will complain that they cannot satisfy the world, and stop men's mouths?

Psal. cxx. 2. "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

## UNCHARITABLENESS.

Envy makes us see what will serve to accuse others, and not perceive what may justify them. A truly good man is always disposed to excuse what is evil in his brethren as far as truth will suffer him.

## FRIDAY MEDITATIONS.

## PENITENCE.

Luke xviii. 3. *The publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

What would become of me, if Thou, O God, shouldst not have mercy upon me?

When I seriously consider these dreadful truths,—*That all they are accursed, who do err, and go astray from thy commandments,—That the unprofitable servant was cast into outer darkness;—When I think of these things, I cannot but fear for myself, and tremble to think of the account I have to give.*

Isaiah lxvi. 2. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Psal. xxxiv. 11. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and will save such as be of an humble spirit."

Look upon me, gracious Lord, with an eye of mercy.

Psal. xxv. 2. "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquities, for they are great."

My only comfort is, they are not too great for thy mercy.

And the Lord Jesus our advocate has assured us even with an oath, *That all sin shall be forgiven unto the sons of men.* That is, if with hearty repentance and true faith they turn unto God.

O most powerful advocate! I put my cause into thy hands;—let it be unto thy servant according to this word;—let thy blood and merits plead for my pardon;—say unto me, as thou didst unto the penitent in thy gospel, *Thy sins are forgiven.* And grant that I may live to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Matt. vi. 14. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses."

Even the power to perform this most kind condition must be from thy grace, O Jesus!

And I trust thou wilt grant me this grace, because the very will to ask it is from Thee, and from thy will, which wills nothing in vain.

Perfect, therefore, O my Saviour, the work which

Thou hast begun in me; and let me feel the effects of thy grace, in the constancy of my devotion,—in the care of my soul,—in the faithful discharge of my duty,—and in all such acts of righteousness, piety, and charity, by which I shall be judged at the last day.

John v. 14. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

Make me, O Lord, ever mindful of my infirmities and backslidings, that I may be more watchful and more importunate for grace, for the time to come.

Matt. v. 7. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Give me, O Lord, a true compassion for the wants and miseries of others, that thou mayst have compassion upon me.

Luke xvi. 10. "There is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Lord, increase the number of penitents, and the joys of heaven, in delivering me and all sinners from the power of the devil, and in vouchsafing us the grace of a true conversion.

Matt. v. 4. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

O Lord, grant that I may seek for comfort not in the things of this world, but by a sincere repentance for my sins, by which God is dishonored, and his judgments hanging over my head.

Luke xix. 10. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

O comfortable words for lost sinners; God himself seeks to save them. O thou, who sought me when I was astray, save me for thy mercy's sake, and preserve that which thou hast sought and found.

Matt. ix. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

O Jesus, conduct and keep me to thyself, or I may surely miss the way.

Phil. ii. 12. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

It was not in myself, O God, to begin the work of my conversion;—finish, I beseech Thee, that which Thou hast begun in me; may I close with thy grace and persevere unto my life's end.

Micah vii. 18. "God retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."

Ezra ix. 15. "O Lord God, behold, we are before thee in our trespasses; we cannot stand before thee for this."

Numb. xiv. 19. "Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of thy servant, according to the greatness of thy mercy."

O say unto me, as thou didst unto Moses, *I have pardoned thee.*

Ezek. xviii. 22. "All his iniquities that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him."

Lord, be merciful unto us, for we have sinned in the midst of light, and even against light.

1 John i. 9. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

These are comfortable words to one whom the sight of his sins has cast into a dread of the judgments of God. Both *that* dread, and the hatred of sin, and the dependence upon the promise of God, and the love that that produces in the soul, are owing entirely to the blood of Jesus Christ.

2 Sam. ix. 8. "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

My only support is, that my sins have not put me out of the reach of that mercy which is infinite.

Who can understand his errors? O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.



O Lord, be favorable unto me; pardon and deliver me from all my sins.

Grant that my sins may never rise up in judgment against me, nor bring shame and confusion of face upon me.

My soul truly waiteth still upon God, for of him cometh my salvation.

John vi. 20. "It is I, be not afraid."

Lord Jesus, in all the troubles that shall befall me, speak these comfortable words to my soul, *It is I, be not afraid*; and then I shall be secure both from presumption and despair.

John viii. 24. "If ye believe not that I am he, (that is, the Messiah, the Son of God,) ye shall die in your sins."

O Jesus, the only refuge of sinners, does the world know what it is to die in sin?—I believe, Lord, increase my faith, and deliver us all from the dreadful state of final impenitency.

31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

May I, O Jesus, love the truths of thy word; make the gospel my delight; and continue in the practice of them to my life's end.

51. "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

O Jesus, Thou hast made known to us another death, besides that which separates the soul from the body. O may thy grace and mercy secure us from the bitter pains of eternal death.

Luke vii. 7. "Say the word, and my servant shall be healed."

I acknowledge, O Jesus, the almighty power of thy grace to heal all the disorders of my soul; O deal with me according to the multitude of thy mercies, and heal my soul of its sad disorders.

John iii. 24. "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Give me, O Jesus, an inward disposition to holiness, an humble and contrite heart, a dependence on the will of God, an acknowledgment of his goodness, and a zeal for his glory; to which all the ordinances of his law and gospel should lead us.

#### GOOD USE OF TIME.

Grant, O Lord, that, as I have but a short time to live, and an eternal interest depending, I may not squander away one moment in vanity, or in that which will not profit me in the day of adversity.

Rom. xi. 16. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved."

O God, the God of Abraham, look upon thine everlasting covenant; cause the captivity of Judah and of Israel to return. They were thy people; O be Thou their Saviour, that all who love Jerusalem, and mourn for her, may rejoice with her for Jesus Christ's sake, their Saviour and ours.—Amen.

#### IN TIME OF PUBLIC DISTRACTIONS.

O Sovereign Lord! I prostrate myself before Thee, confessing my own sin, and acknowledging the justice of any scourge which Thou shalt bring upon us; and trembling to think how much I may have contributed towards it;—beseeching Thee to have compassion on us, in these days of confusion.

O Lord, prevent the judgments that threaten us;—purge this nation from all such crimes as may be the cause of thy heavy displeasure against us,—from *licentiousness and drunkenness*;—from *swearing, lying, and perjury*;—from *sacrilege, injustice, fraud, disobedience, malice, and uncharitableness*.—Take from us the spirit of *atheism, irreligion, and profaneness*; and in mercy rebuke and convert all such as give encouragement or countenance to any of these vices, which may provoke Thee to give us up to infidelity or destruction. O let thy anger be

turned away from us;—give us not over unto the will of our adversaries, and unto such as strive to bring all things into confusion. Preserve this Church in the midst of all dangers; and restore unto us peace and unity; and grant us grace to make a better use of these blessings for the time to come, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Isaiah lxii. 6. "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence: give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem (his Church,) a praise on the earth."

*Thy kingdom come.*—Though we are altogether unworthy of the good times Thou hast promised thy Church, yet we beseech Thee deprive us not of them.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken, and do not defer these good days, for thine own sake, oh! our God.

We hope a day is coming, when all the world will come and worship thee, O God.—See Jer. xxxi.

#### CHRIST'S PATIENCE.

What sorrows did he undergo, and with what patience did he suffer them! Patient, when Judas unworthily betrayed him with a kiss,—patient, when Caiaphas despitely used him;—patient, when hurried from one place to another;—patient, when Herod with his men of war set him at naught;—patient, when Pilate so unrighteously condemned him;—patient, when scourged and crowned with thorns;—patient, when his cross was laid upon him, when he was reviled, reproached, scoffed at, and every way abused. Lord Jesus, grant me patience, after this example, to bear thy holy will in all things.

#### CHRIST'S LOVE AND CHARITY.

Where shall we take our pattern, but from Thee?—Thou caldest thy followers thy friends. Thou didst stoop down to wash their feet, who were not worthy to untie thy shoe. Thou didst forgive and restore Peter, when he had abjured Thee. Thou didst vouchsafe to satisfy Thomas, who would not believe but upon his own terms. Thou didst forgive and pray for thy bloody persecutors. O thou Fountain and Pattern of Love, grant that I may love Thee above all things, and my neighbor as myself!

#### SATURDAY MEDITATIONS.

##### PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

Deut. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end.*

John ix. 4. *The night cometh, when no man can work.*

A VERY gracious intimation. Lord, grant that I may never forget it; and that *now, now* is the time, in which to provide for eternity.

What a wise man then, when he comes to die would wish he had done, that he ought to do forthwith; for death is at hand, and the consequences of a surprise most dreadful. He will then wish, if he has not done it, with all his soul.

First. That he had made a just and Christian settlement of his worldly concerns; so as not to be distracted with the cares of this world, when all his thoughts should be upon another.

Secondly. That he had made his peace with God by a timely repentance.

Thirdly. That he had faithfully discharged the duties of his calling.

Fourthly. That he had weaned his affections from things temporal, and loosened the ties which fasten us to the world.

Fifthly. That he had crucified the flesh with its

affections and lusts; so that, being weary of this life, he might be more desirous of a better.

Sixthly. That he had got such habits of patience and resignation to the will of God, during his health, as may render death, with all the train of miseries leading to it, less frightful and amazing.

Seventhly, and lastly. That by a constant practice of devotion preparatory for death, he had learned what to pray for, what to hope for, what to depend on in his last sickness.

And this, gracious Lord, is what I wish for, what I pray for, and what I purpose shall be the constant practice of my life. Amen.

2 Kings xx. 1. "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."

May God, who has every way provided for me, and put it into my power to be *just* to all men, *charitable* to the poor, *grateful* to my friends, *kind* to my servants, and a *benefactor* to the public: may he add this to all his favors, and grant that in making *my last will*, I may faithfully discharge all these engagements; and that for want of that, no curse may cleave to myself, or to any thing I shall leave behind me. Amen.

But, above all things, I beg of Thee, O God, to enable me to set my inward house, *my soul*, in order, before I die.

Give me true repentance for all the errors of my life past, and steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus Christ: that my sins may be done away by thy mercy, and my pardon sealed in heaven.

Prov. xxvii. 13. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy."

Behold, O God, a creature, liable every moment to death, prostrate before Thee, begging for Jesus Christ's sake, that faith and repentance to which Thou hast promised mercy and pardon.

Discover to me, O Thou Searcher of Hearts, the charge that is against me; that I may know, and confess, and bewail, and abhor, and forsake, and repent of all the evils I have been guilty of.

Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father, who desireth not the death of a sinner; for thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past.

And, O blessed Advocate, who art able to save them for ever who come unto God by Thee, seeing Thou ever livest to make intercession for us, I put my cause into thy hands: let thy *power* defend me; thy *blood* and *merits* plead for me; supply all the defects of my repentance; procure for me a full discharge of all my sins before I die: and by thy mighty grace, confirm and strengthen me in all goodness during the remainder of my life, that my death may be a blessing to me, and that I may find mercy at the great day. Amen.

Ephes. iv. 24. "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

This, O God, is what I desire and purpose, by thy grace, to do; and do again renew the vows which I have so often made, and too often broken.

I renounce the devil and all his works; the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, resolving, by thy grace, neither to follow nor be led by them.

And, O God, assist me, that neither sloth nor corruption may ever make me lay aside or forget these resolutions; but that I may live to Thee,—be an instrument to thy glory, by serving Thee faithfully; and that I may be found so doing when thou art pleased to call me hence, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Col. iii. 2. "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

And may Almighty God, who alone can do it,

effectually convince me of the vanity of all that is desirable in this present life, that I may not, like an unbeliever, look for happiness here.

Give me, O Lord, a perfect indifference for the world, its *profits*, *pleasures*, *honors*, *fame*, and all its *idols*.

Represent thyself unto me as my true happiness, that I may love Thee with all my heart, and soul, and strength; so that when I am called out of this world, I may rejoice in hope of going to the paradise of God, where the souls of the faithful enjoy rest and felicity, in hopes of a blessed resurrection, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Luke ix. 23. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Blessed Jesus, who pleasest not thyself, but takest upon Thee the form of a servant, give me resolution to deny my inclinations;—to subdue my corrupt affections, and to show the fruits of repentance;—for mispending my time, by retirement;—for the errors of my tongue, by silence;—and for all the sins of my life, by a deep humiliation patiently submitting to all the troubles with which Thou shalt think fit to exercise or punish me; so that being effectually weaned from this world, and weary of its corruptions, I may long to repose myself in the grave, in hopes of a better life, through thy mercy and merits, O Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 Pet. iv. 8. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins."

Possess my soul, O God, with a sincere love to Thee, and for all mankind.

Let no malice or ill-will abide in me. Give me grace to forgive all that have offended me; and forgive my many offences against Thee, and against my neighbor.

Make me ever ready to give, and glad to distribute, that thy gifts passing through my hands, may procure for me the prayers of the poor; and that I may lay up in store for myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may attain eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Thy will be done.*

Fortify my soul, blessed Jesus, with the same spirit of submission with which Thou underwentst the death of the cross, that I may receive all events with resignation to the will of God;—that I may receive troubles, afflictions, disappointments sickness, and death itself, without amazement; these being the appointment of thy justice for the punishment of sin, and of thy mercy for the salvation of sinners.

Let this be the constant practice of my life, to be pleased with all thy choices, that when sickness and death approach, I may be prepared to submit my will to the will of my Maker.

And O that, in the mean time, my heart may always go along with my lips in this petition,—*thy will be done*. Amen.

Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment."

May the thoughts of death, and of what must follow by the grace of God, mortify in me all carnal security, and fondness for this world, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And O that I may make my calling and election sure, that I may die in peace, and rest in the mansions of glory, in hopes of a blessed resurrection and a favorable judgment at the great day.

And may the consideration of a judgment to come, oblige me to examine, to try, and to judge myself, that I may prevent a severe judgment of God by a true repentance, and lead a life answer-



be to amendment of life, and that I may find mercy at the great day.

John v. 28. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

May that dreadful word oblige me to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, I may escape that dreadful doom!

And may the hopes of heaven and happiness sweeten all the troubles of this mortal life!

O Lord Jesus, who hast redeemed us with thy precious blood, make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting. Amen.

O let my name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life at the great day!

I thank Thee, O Lord, for all the favors of my life, and especially for that Thou hast vouchsafed me *time* and a *will to think of and prepare for death*, while I am in my full strength, while I may redeem my misspent time, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Let us consider *death* as a punishment, to which, as sinners, we are justly condemned.

My God, I humbly submit to it, and to thy *justice*; and trust in thy *mercy*, and *goodness*, and *promises*, both now, and at the hour of death.

*Death* is inevitable; the *time* uncertain; the *judgment*, which follows, without appeal; and followed by an *eternity of happiness or misery*.

Lord, grant that I may consider this as I ought to do.

Let me remember that I shall come forth out of the grave, just as I go in; either the object of God's *mercy*, or of his *wrath*, to all *eternity*.

He lives to no purpose who is not glorifying God. Our greatest hopes should lie beyond the grave.

No man must go to heaven when he dies, who has not sent his heart thither while he lives.

Our greatest security is to be derived from duty, and our only confidence from the *mercy* of God through Jesus Christ.

*Sickness*, if you consider it as painful to nature, and not as a favor from God, will be a torment to you. To make it really comfortable, believe it to be ordered by a loving Father, a wise Physician; that it is the effect of his mercy for our salvation; that being fastened to the cross, you become dearer to God, as being most like his own Son. God will loose you when it is best for you.

We often hinder our recovery by trusting to physic more than to God: means succeed just as far as God pleases;—if he send diseases as a remedy to cure the disorders of the soul, he only can cure them;—while you are chastened, you are sure God loves you;—you are not sure of that, when you are without chastisement.

A timely preparation for death frees us from the fear of death, and from all other fears.

A true Christian is neither *fond* of life, nor *weary* of it.

*The sting of death is sin*; therefore, an holy life is the *only* cure for the fear of death. We ought to fear sin more than death, because death cannot hurt us but by sin.

Phil. i. 21. "To me to die is gain."

O that I may be able to say this, when I come to die; and so I shall if I live as becomes a Christian.

*Holiness* being a necessary qualification for *happiness*, it follows that the holiest man will be the happiest, (for there are certain degrees of glory,) therefore a Christian should lose no time to gain all the degrees of virtue and holiness he possibly can; and he that does not do so, is in a fair way of not being happy at all.

It concerns us more than our life is worth, to know what will become of us when we die.

Who will pretend to say that he is not in a very few days to die?

The only happiness of this life is to be secure of a blessed eternity.

Now is the time in which we are to choose *where* and *what* we are to be to all eternity; there is, therefore, no time to be lost to make this choice.

No kind of death is to be feared by him who lives well.

If we consider death as the night of that day which is given us to work in, in which to work out our salvation; and that when the night is come, no man can work; how frightful must death be to such as are not prepared for it! And if we consider it as the beginning of eternity, it is still more dreadful.—It is for this reason called the *King of Terrors*; and the Psalmist, when he would express the worst of evils, saith, *The terrors of death are fallen upon me*.

Judges xiii. 23. "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things."

This is the comfort of all God's servants: if he gives them opportunities of renewing their vows, and a will to do them;—if he accepts their alms and their good deeds, that is, gives them a heart to do such;—if he touches their hearts with a sense of their unworthiness;—if he chastens them with afflictions;—if he visits them with his Holy Spirit, &c.;—all these are reasons for a Christian to hope, that these graces are not in vain, but that God will crown them with pardon, favor, and happiness eternal.

Matt. xxv. 6. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

A terrible voice to all such as shall meet him, not as a bridegroom, but as an inexorable Judge.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not be of the number of those who dread thy coming, who cannot but with regret submit to the necessity of dying, and who have neglected to prepare for death till the last hour.

Matt. xxv. 10. "And the door was shut."

Death shuts the door. No more to be done. It is then too late to repent, to resolve, to promise, and to do any thing.

Matt. xxv. 13. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

A person, whose life is full of good works, whose heart is devoted to God, whose faith and hope are pure and sincere, will never be surprised by death.

Matt. xxvii. 50. *Jesus Christ yielded up the Ghost*. And so his death became a voluntary sacrifice. Let mine be so, O blessed Jesus! Let thy death sanctify me; and let my spirit be received with thine!

Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Give me, O Lord, that desire and earnest longing, which I ought to have, for that happy moment which is to release me from this state of banishment, and translate me to a better place; and grant that I may never lose the sight of that important moment.

Let me, O God, have my lot and portion with thy saints.

When we come to die, the great enemy of our souls will then attack us with all his stratagems. It is good, therefore, to be prepared.

If he attacks your faith, say with St. Paul, "I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

I believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.

I believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

I believe in God, the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God.

I give Thee hearty thanks, O heavenly Father, that thou hast vouchsafed to call me to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in Thee. Confirm this faith in me evermore,—grant that I may die in this faith, and in the peace and communion of thy Holy Church; and that I may be united to Jesus, the head of this Church, and to all his members, by a love that shall never end. Amen.

John iii. 15. "Whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have eternal life."

I believe:—Lord, increase my faith: and let it be unto thy servant according to this word.

Luke xxiii. 43. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

O blessed Jesus! support my spirit when I come to die, with this comfortable promise. *This day shalt thou be in paradise.*

We indeed suffer justly the sentence of death. O Thou, who didst nothing amiss, and yet didst suffer for me; remember me, O Lord, now that Thou art in Thy kingdom.

What terror, what affliction, can equal that of a Christian, who has never thought of weaning his heart from the world till he comes to die; who can find nothing in this life, but what must render him unworthy of mercy! But the greatest of all miseries would be to despair of mercy, and not to have recourse to it.

Need a person, who has received the sentence of death, be persuaded to prepare for death? And is not this our case?

Luke xii. 36. "And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

He who waits for his master will always endeavor to be in that state in which he desires to be found.

A Christian should not look upon death with anxiety, but with the satisfaction of a good servant, who waits with impatience for his master's return, in hopes of being approved of.

Luke xii. 40. "Be ye ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

And are not so many sudden deaths sufficient to convince us of the folly of assuring ourselves of one day? Let every one of us, therefore, count himself of the number of those that are to be surprised by death; this will make us watchful.

Luke xii. 43. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing;" that is, doing his duty.

And then, miserable will he be, whom death surpriseth either doing *evil*, or doing *nothing*, or doing that which God does not require of him. Can one imagine, that the generality of Christians believe this truth; suffer me not, O God, to fall into a forgetfulness of it.

We complain (saith Seneca) of the shortness of life; he answers, *Vita, si scias uti, longa est*—Life is long, if you know how to use it. But then it is Christianity only can teach us how to use our life; namely, *in working out our own salvation*: And we are sure it is long enough for that, because God has appointed it for that very end.

As Christianity alone can take from us the love of life, so it is this alone that can free us from the fear of death.

Eternity adds an infinite weight to all our actions, whether good or bad.

If we desire that our death should, like that of Jesus Christ, be a sacrifice of love and obedience, we must take care to make our life so too.

Acts ix. 39. "This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds; and she died."

Happy that soul which death finds rich, not in

gold, furniture, learning, reputation, or barren purposes and desires, but in good works.

Acts vii. 59. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

O my God, enable me to live to Thee; that when the hour of death shall come, I may thus with confidence offer up my spirit to Jesus Christ.

Rev. iii. 3. "Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

Is it not, then, the highest presumption to persuade ourselves that we have always time sufficient, when Jesus Christ himself declares that we have not one moment certain?

It is purely for want of faith, that we tremble at the approach of our deliverer; and which is to destroy in us the reign of sin, and instate us in that of glory.

Let us resign up ourselves to God, as to the manner in which it shall please him to determine our lives, praying only that it may be to his glory and our salvation.

What does it signify how this house of clay perishesth, which hinders the perfect renovation of the soul, and the sight of God?

2 Cor. v. 1. "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

We know, we believe, we promise ourselves this, but we think too seldom of it, and we still make less use of what we know, in order to wean our hearts from this world.

Would we look upon our bodies as houses of clay just ready to fall, we should think of that eternal house, we should sigh after our native country, and be willing to leave a place of misery and banishment.

Remember that death is the punishment of sin; we ought therefore to resign ourselves up to it in a Christian manner, looking upon ourselves as condemned to it in Adam.

He who has lived and looked on earth, as in a place of banishment, will look upon death as a gracious deliverance from it.

Consider well, that life is given and continued for no other end, but to glorify God in working out our own salvation.

A man goes with confidence to meet the bridegroom, when he has been faithful to him, and believes him to be his friend.

Heb. ii. 15. "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life long subject to bondage."

Bondage is the sentence of rebellious slaves;—we were condemned to it in Adam; and being under this sentence of death and the Divine Justice, we ought to expect it with submission, and be always preparing for it. This is the only way to be secure, and from fearing death when it comes.

Gather us, O God, to the number of thine own, at what time and in what manner Thou pleasest:—only let us be without reproach, and blameless;—let faith, and love, and peace accompany our last periods.

We look upon a body without a soul with horror. We can see a body with a soul, which is like to die eternally, without concern.

Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, (I am delivered,) through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, O Lord, that though my outward man decay daily, yet that my inward man may grow and increase in piety and virtue unto the day of my death.

He that hath lived best will stand in need of mercy at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment; and he that hath lived the worst, has not



sinned beyond the efficacy of the blood of Christ, provided his repentance be sincere.

My God! let thy glory be magnified by saving a sinner, by redeeming a captive slave, by enlightening a heart overwhelmed in darkness, by changing a wicked heart, by pardoning innumerable transgressions, iniquities, and sins.

If my hopes were placed upon any thing but the infinite mercies of God, in Jesus Christ, which can never fail, I should utterly despair.

Acts ii. 21. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

These, my God, are thine own words;—give me leave to trust in them, to depend on them, both now, and at the hour of death.

John xvii. 4. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

O Lord, the very best of men come infinitely short of this pattern; how then shall I, an unprofitable servant, appear before my Lord and Judge!

Gen. iii. 15. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

This, my God, is thy sure, thy eternal promise; I believe it; I trust in it; I will hold me fast by it.

Luke xxii. 42. "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

May I, O blessed Jesus, when my death approaches, breathe out my last with these words, and with the same spirit of submission.

#### DEATH OF FRIENDS.

Let us cast our eyes upon sin, which is the cause of death, and then we shall weep with reason.

Preserve in us a lively sense of the world to come.

And when I shall not be able to pray for myself, the good Lord favorably hear the prayers of his Church for me.

Grant that in the day of the general resurrection, I may then hear those joyful words of thy Son,—*Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.*

Grant that I may have a perfect conquest over the world, sin, and death, through Christ, who by his death hath overcome him who hath the power of death.

Luke xxiii. 43. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Oh Jesus, who hadst compassion on this thief, even at the hour of death, have mercy upon me, who now repent of all my misdoings. Suffer not the gates of paradise to be shut against me when I die, *Thou hast opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.*

Restore my soul, at the great day to life eternal. Give me the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the courage of Peter, and the comfort of Paul, and a true submission to thy will.

Apply to my soul all the wholesome medicines of thy Son's passion, death, and resurrection, against the power of Satan, against all unreasonable fears and despair, and ease my fearful conscience.

Hear the prayers of thy Church for me, and for all in my condition, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Psa. lxxi. 9. "Cast me not away in the time of age; forsake me not when my strength faileth me."

Grant, O Lord, that the end of my life may be truly Christian; without sin, without shame, and if it so please Thee, without pain.

Psa. lxxiii. 26. "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

I Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

Lord be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

I confess my wickedness, and am sorry for my sin. For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin for it is great.

The Lord is high unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will save such as are of an humble spirit.

Psa. xxxix. 8. "And now, Lord, what is my hope; truly my hope is in Thee."

Psa. ciii. 14. "Lord, thou knowest whereof we are made; that we are but dust."

Let my misery, my fear, my sorrow, move Thee to compassion.

Despise not, O Lord, the work of thine own hands.

I freely forgive all that have offended me.

Oh Thou, that never failest them that seek Thee, have pity on me.

Nevertheless, though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in Thee.

O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul, Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

O go not far from me, for trouble is at hand, and there is none to help me.

The sorrows of my heart are enlarged: O bring Thou me out of my troubles.

O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be confounded, for I have put my trust in Thee.

Withdraw not thy mercy from me, O Lord; let thy loving kindness and thy truth always preserve me.

O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me; make haste, O Lord, to help me.

Show thy servant the light of thy countenance, and save me for thy mercy's sake.

O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor, and my heart is wounded within me.

Wherefore hidest Thou thy face, and forgettest our misery and trouble?

My God! save thy servant, who putteth his trust in Thee.

Thou, O Lord, art full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and in truth.

When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God; when my heart is vexed I will complain.

Will the Lord absent himself for ever? Will he be no more entreated?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious? And I said, it is mine own infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

Luke xii. 33. *Sell all that ye have, and give to the poor.* That is, renounce all the pleasures that wealth affords, rather than defraud the poor and distressed of their right:—It is utterly impossible to take delight in wealth, and love God with all the soul.

Matt. xxv. 40. "For as much (for as often) as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

*As often*:—Who then would miss any occasion? *The least*:—Who then would despise any object?

*To me*:—So that in serving the poor, we serve Jesus Christ. O comfortable declaration!

Mark ix. 41. "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ:—verily, (with an oath he assures us,) he shall not lose his reward."

This should always, if possible, be our intention: *This poor, oppressed, miserable man belongs to Christ.* This would wonderfully enhance the value of our good deeds before God.

#### ALMS.

I Cor. xiii. 2. *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

If external acts of charity do not proceed from

charity, that is, from a love of God, and of our neighbor for his sake, they are as nothing in the sight of God. My God, pour into my heart the most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtue.

Gal. vi. 10. "Let us do good unto all men."

He who seeks for Jesus Christ in the poor, in order to relieve and assist *him*, will not be too solicitous to find any other merit in them than that of Jesus Christ.

For our earthly things, O Lord, give us heavenly; for temporal, eternal.

Luke iii. 11. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none."

That is, let him that hath plenty, and to spare, of the necessities of life, let him give to him that wants.

The proportion of charity appointed by God himself to his own people, for the relief of the poor, was every year a thirtieth part of all their income, or a tenth every third year.

This was the Jews' proportion. He that came short of this was a breaker of the law, and without repentance and restitution, had no hopes of pardon.

The Christian's proportion ought to be greater, as his hopes and reward will be greater.

We should in all our charities direct our eyes towards Christ and his members; it is this which heightens the smallest gifts. Men reward what is done on human motives; God, such as are done for his sake.

He that for his good actions expects the applause of men, runs the hazard of losing the reward of God.

The poor are, as it were, the receivers of the rights and dues belonging unto God; we must have a care of defrauding them.

Luke xi. 41. *But rather give alms of such things as you have, (or as you are able,) and all things are clean to you.* That is proportion your alms to your estate, lest God proportion your estate to your alms.

It is a necessary Christian duty, (whatever men think of it,) to part with our worldly enjoyments for the sake of Christ.

The very best of men are only instruments in God's hands to receive and to give what God bestows upon them. And this they should do, without any desire of glory or self-interest.

Let us make light of money and riches, and send it before us into the heavenly treasures, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; but where it will be kept, to our eternal advantage, under the custody of God himself.

Thou, O Lord, hast been all mercy to me; grant that I may be all mercy to others for Christ's sake.

Remember to give to those that are ashamed to ask; and do not forget your poor relations, lest you be worse than an infidel.

Rom. xii. 18. "He that sheweth mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness."

The good Lord preserve me from vanity, and from seeking applause for my charity.

Not unto me, but unto Thee, O God, be the thanks, and praise, and glory.

The merits of the poor are not to be the rule of our charity. God himself maketh the sun to shine upon the evil and the good.

If we would but moderate our vanity, we should always have enough for charity.

Send thy blessing upon my substance, and continue to me a willing mind to help such as have need, according to my ability.

Good advice, and devout petitions, should accompany our charity.

O God, who knowest the necessities of all thy

creatures, give thy poor the spiritual things they stand in need of.

Support thy poor members, O Jesus, under all their difficulties, and sanctify their bodily wants to the salvation of their souls.

Lord, grant that they may bear their poor estate with patience and resignation, and that we may one day meet in the paradise of God.

Jesus Christ is continually humbled in his members; some are poor, in prison, sick, naked, hungry, &c. Let me, O Lord, see and help Thee in all these objects.

A man that has faith will be glad to discharge himself of some part of the burthen of temporal goods, in order to secure those that are eternal; and to be in some measure the preserver of his brethren.

Psa. cxii. 5. *A good (a charitable) man will guide his affairs with discretion; that is, he will cut off and retrench all needless expenses in apparel, diet, diversions, &c. that he may give to him that needeth.*

Let your alms be in secret as much as may be.

CHARITY; OR THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOR.

It is but the first essay of charity to give alms.

Whoever shows mercy to men, will certainly receive mercy from God.

1 John iii. 15. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

A man has already killed him in his heart, whose life is grievous to him, and at whose death he would rejoice.

1 John iii. 15. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Can we believe that it is God that saith this, and delay one moment to be reconciled?

It is not enough to love our brethren; we must love them upon a principle of faith, in the name, for the sake, and as members of Jesus Christ.

Luke vi. 37. "Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you."

Give me, O my God, an heart full of Christian meekness and charity, that I may willingly forget the evil I have received, and be always disposed to do good to others.

We love our neighbor after a Christian manner, when we love him for God's sake; and for God's sake do him good.

## THE LITANY.

O God the Father of Heaven; have mercy upon me, keep and defend me.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world: have mercy upon me, save and deliver me.

O God the Holy Ghost; have mercy upon me, strengthen and comfort me.

Remember not, Lord, mine offences, nor the offences of my forefathers; neither take Thou vengeance of our sins: Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

From thy wrath and heavy indignation; from the guilt and burthen of my sins; from the dreadful sentence of the last judgment;

*Good Lord, deliver me.*

From the sting and terrors of conscience; from impatience, distrust, and despair; from extremity of sickness and pain, which may withdraw my mind from God;

*Good Lord deliver me.*

From the bitter pangs of eternal death; from the gates of hell; from the powers of darkness: and from the illusions of Satan;

*Good Lord, deliver me.*



By thy manifold and great mercies; by thy manifold and great merits; by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy bitter cross and passion; by thy mighty resurrection; by thy glorious ascension and most acceptable intercession; and by the graces of the Holy Ghost;

*Good Lord, deliver me.*

For the glory of thy name; for thy loving mercy and truth's sake;

*Good Lord, deliver me.*

In my last and greatest need; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment;

*Good Lord, deliver me.*

As thou hast delivered all thy saints and servants which called upon Thee in their extremity;

*Good Lord, deliver me*;—and receive my soul for thy mercy's sake.

Be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my sins, which, by the malice of the devil, or by my own frailty, I have at any time of my life committed against Thee.

Lay not to my charge what in the lust of the eye, the pride of life or vanity, I have committed against Thee.

Lay not to my charge what, by an angry spirit, by vain and idle words, by foolish jesting, I have committed against Thee.

Make me partaker of all thy mercies and promises in Christ Jesus.

Vouchsafe my soul a place of rest in the Paradise of God, with all thy blessed saints; and my body a part in the blessed resurrection.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world;

*Have mercy upon me.*

Thou that takest away the sins of the world;

*Grant me thy peace.*

Thou that sittest at the right hand of God;

*Have mercy upon me.*

Have mercy upon me, and receive my prayer; even the prayer which Thou hast taught me;

*Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.*

O Lord, deal not with me after my sins; neither reward me after mine iniquities.

O God, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desires of such as be sorrowful; mercifully assist my prayers which I make before Thee, at such times especially as I am preparing for death and for eternity. And, O Lord, graciously hear me, that those evils, those illusions, and assaults which my great enemy worketh against me, may be brought to naught, and by the providence of thy goodness they may be dispersed; that thy servant, being delivered from all temptations, may give thanks to Thee, with thy Holy Church to all eternity.—*Amen.*

Let us endeavor, by a timely repentance, to prevent the reproaches which otherwise our consciences will cast upon us at the hour of death.

THE SUPPORT OF A PENITENT, AT THE HOUR OF DEATH.

John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

1 John ii. 1. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;"—who came into the world to save sinners,—who died for us

when we were his enemies, that he might offer us unto God.

It is our Judge himself that hath assured us, that *all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men.*

## EJACULATIONS.

TAKE from me all evil imaginations,—all impurity of thought,—all inclinations to lust,—all envy, pride, and hypocrisy,—all falsehood, deceit, and an irregular life,—all covetousness, vain-glory, and sloth,—all malice, anger, and wrath,—all remembrance of injuries,—every thing that is contrary to thy will, O most Holy God.

May I never hear with pleasure, nor ever repeat, such things as may dishonor God, or injure my neighbor, or my own character.

O give me light to see, an heart to close with, and power to do thy will, O God.

## LOVE OF GOD, &c.

Bless me, O God, with the love of Thee, and of my neighbor. Give me peace of conscience, the command of my affections; and for the rest, *Thy will be done.*

O King of Peace, give us thy peace, keep us in love and charity.

Make thyself, O God, the absolute master of my heart.

*They that be whole need not a Physician.* It belongs to Thee, O Sovereign Physician, to make us sensible of our maladies, and to make us go to Thee for help. O say unto my soul this word of salvation, *Behold, thou art made whole.*

*Without me ye can do nothing.* Miserable, indeed, is he who pretends to walk without Thee. O give me light to see, an heart to close with, and a power to do thy will. From thy Spirit I hope to receive these graces.

John xii. 26. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and him will my Father honor."

Let me never flatter myself that I serve Thee, my Saviour, unless I follow thy example at the expense of every thing I love or fear besides. O keep my heart fixed upon that *honor* which God has prepared for those that follow Thee.

O Divine Spirit, render me worthy of thy presence and consolation.

Fill my heart with an holy dread of thy judgments.

Give me a true sense and knowledge of the danger and the evil of sin; and may I, with a prudent moderation only, be concerned for temporal things.

*Jesus Christ* is always in his temple, and near you, (if your soul be fit for him to dwell in;) to Him apply on all occasions:

As your *Master*, for grace to study, to love, and to follow his instructions. He requires nothing but what he first practised himself:

As your *Lord*, that you may love and serve him faithfully, and fulfil all his commands:

As your *Pattern*, that you may follow his example, and imitate his virtues:

As your *Saviour*, that he may be your refuge and confidence, your strength and support, your peace and consolation, your Saviour now and at the hour of death:

As your *King*, that he may give laws to your soul, and that you may surrender yourself to his commands; and never rebel, or resist his authority:

As your *Shepherd*. Keep me in thy flock by thy almighty grace. I am one of the lost sheep which thou camest to seek. Take me under thy care, and restore me to thy fold. Increase thy flock for the honor of thy name.

## WILFUL SIN.

Let me rather choose to die, than to sin against my conscience.

## PENITENT.

I am ashamed to come before Thee, but I must come or perish. I know that thou art angry with me for my sins, but I know too that Thou pitiest me, or why do I yet live? Make me full of sorrow for my sin, and full of hope of thy mercy and pardon. Look upon the infirmities of thy servant, and consider his weakness. Sensible of my own sad condition, weak and miserable, sinful and ignorant, liable to eternal death, I prostrate myself before Thee, imploring thy help and pardon.

Gracious God, never abandon me to the opposition I shall at any time make to thy grace.

Blessed be God that he has so often directed me, and not left me to the desires of my own heart.

Put a stop to the torrent of wickedness and profaneness, which carries all before it.

I confess my sins to Thee, O God; do Thou hide them from all the world.

*Eternity.* Lord, imprint upon my heart a lively idea of eternity, that the sorrowful passages of this life, which are so uneasy and frightful to nature, may vanish or be borne with patience.

*Example.* Pardon my sin, and forgive all such as have been misled by any evil example of mine.

Matt. v. 48. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

O divine repairer of our corrupt nature, may thy all-powerful grace make me as perfect as Thou hast commanded me to be!

## HOLINESS.

O God, who hast called me to holiness, give me a firm faith in thy power through our Lord Jesus Christ, that by his assistance I may get the mastery over all my sins and corruptions; that I may be redeemed from all iniquity; that I may be holy, as he who has called me is holy.

Possess my soul with an earnest desire of pleasing Thee, and with a fear of offending Thee.

Let me be ever ready to forgive injuries, and backward to offer any.

Give me, O Lord, faith and patience, that I may neither murmur at thy appointments, nor be angry against the instruments of thy justice.

Deliver me from the errors and vices of the age I live in; from infidelity, wicked principles, from profaneness, heresies, and schism.

I most heartily thank Thee, O God, for thy perpetual care of me, for all thy mercies bestowed upon me, for the blessings of nature and of grace.

Grant, O God, that I may never receive thy grace in vain, but that I may live like one who believes and hopes for the joys of heaven.

Let me ever be sorry for my sins; thankful for thy blessings, fear thy judgments, love thy mercies, remember thy presence.

Give me an humble mind, a godly fear, and a quiet conscience. Weaken, O Lord, the power of Satan in this place, and the tyranny of his ministers.

## IN TIME OF PESTILENCE OR DANGER

Set thy saving mark upon our houses, and give order to the destroyer not to hurt us.

John xvi. 23. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

Upon this promise, blessed Lord, I depend; beseeching Thee, O heavenly Father, for thy dear Son's sake, to give me the graces I most stand in need of.

## AFTER PRAYERS.

Vouchsafe us those graces and blessings which Thou knowest to be needful for us, notwithstanding our great unworthiness.

*Riches.* Shut my heart, O Lord, against the love of worldly riches, lest I betray Thee, as Judas did. May thy Holy Spirit, O God, fill my heart, that it may appear in all my words and actions that I am governed by it.

Luke x. 33. "And when he saw him, he had compassion on him."

O Jesus, the true Samaritan, look upon the wounds which sin hath caused in my soul, and have compassion on me.

May I always resign my will and my desires to him who knows what is good for us, better than we ourselves do.

## HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Give me, O God, a sincere love for the truths of the gospel, a teachable heart, and an obedient will.

*Perseverance.* Finish, O my God, the works of mercy and conversion, which Thou hast begun in me.

Save, O Lord Jesus, a soul which thou hast redeemed by thy blood.

There is no merit in me, O God, to attract thy mercy and goodness, but only my great misery and blindness. May I make a suitable return by an holy life.

According to the greatness of thy goodness, and the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me.

Sanctify my soul and body with thy heavenly blessings, that they may be made thy holy habitation, and that nothing may be found in me, that may offend the eyes of thy majesty.

Protect and keep me in the midst of the dangers of this corrupt world; and by thy light and grace direct me in the way to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ.

*Morning.* I laid me down and slept, and rose again, for the Lord sustained me. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Raise me up, O Lord, at the last day, to life and happiness everlasting.

Blessed be the Lord for his mercies renewed unto me every morning.

O that my eyes may ever be fixed upon the example that our blessed Lord hath left us, and that I may daily endeavor to follow him. Amen.

*Night.* May the Saviour and Guardian of my soul take me under his protection this night and evermore.

I Cor. vii. 35. "Attend upon the Lord without distraction."

O holy Spirit of grace, help my infirmities, that I may fix my thoughts upon my duty; and that I may serve Thee with all my heart and mind.

That I may never give way to wandering thoughts, but watch against them continually.

Look upon me, O Lord, and pity me; make me and let me be thine by the choice of my will.

Make me serious and thoughtful at all times, that I may not fail being so when I attend upon God.

Let not my heart, O God, be inclined to any evil thing. Keep me, O God, from every thing that may displease thee. O make me wise unto salvation.

Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

O that I may never forfeit this power by presumption or want of faith.

John xx. 28. "Thomas said, My Lord and my God."

Thou art, indeed, O Jesus, my Lord, for Thou hast redeemed me by thy precious blood: Thou art



my God, for I am dedicated to Thee, and sanctified by thy Spirit.

Acts ii. 44. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common."

May God grant, that as we are all members of the same body, have one and the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Spirit, and hope to meet in the same paradise; that we may live in unity and godly love, and be charitable according to our ability.

The good Lord grant, that in the day of Christ I may rejoice that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER EXPLAINED.

*Our Father, which art in Heaven.*

I BESEECH thee, O heavenly Father, not for myself only, but for all thy children, that we may all live worthy of the relation which we bear to thee; *that we may not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine: nor wilfully offend so great, so good, so tender a Father: but that we may love thee, and fear thee, not as slaves, but as children:* that we may put our whole trust in thee, and depend upon thine infinite power, wisdom, goodness, and promise to take care of us; that we may leave it to thee to choose what is best for us; and bear with *patience and resignation* all thy fatherly corrections: and that we may serve thee with comfort and pleasure all our days, in hopes of the inheritance which thou hast promised thy obedient children.

*Hallowed be thy name.*

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and all thy works praise thee. Fill our hearts, O God, with a zeal for thy glory, that we may do thee honor, by leading holy lives, and by paying a great regard for every thing that belongs to thee; *thy name, thy day, thy house, thine ordinances, and thy ministers;* and that others, seeing our good works, *may glorify our Father which is in heaven*

*Thy Kingdom come.*

Enlarge thy Kingdom, O God, and deliver the world from the dominion and tyranny of *Satan*, that the kingdoms of the earth may become the kingdoms of Jesus Christ. Hasten the time which thy Spirit hath foretold, *when all nations whom thou hast made shall worship thee and glorify thy name.* Bless the good endeavors of those that strive to propagate the Gospel of thy kingdom: and prepare the hearts of all men to receive it. May all such as own thee for their King, become thy faithful subjects!—Vouchsafe to reign in our hearts, and subdue our will entirely to thine: and prepare us by thy good Spirit for the kingdom of glory.

*Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Dispose me, and all thy children, O Lord and Father, to submit cheerfully to whatever thy providence shall order for us: hearken not to the corrupt desires of our hearts; but to the voice of thine own wisdom, goodness and mercy. Give us a true knowledge of our duty, with an heart disposed to close with thy will, whenever it shall be made known to us, and to perform it with pleasure. Subdue in us whatever is contrary to thy holy will, that through thy grace we may at last become perfect, as our heavenly pattern is.

*Give us this day our Daily Bread.*

We look up unto, and depend upon thee, O heavenly Father, for all the *necessaries and conveniences* of this present life. And may our *bodily* wants engage us to go daily to the throne of grace, for the

wants of our souls! Let thy blessing go along with our honest endeavors, and keep us from all unjust ways of bettering our condition. Give us grace to impart to such as are in want, of what thou shalt give us more than our daily bread; and with all thy other favors, give us, we beseech thee, the blessing of a *thankful and contented* mind.

*And forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Forgive us those sins, O heavenly Father, which separate us from Thee: forgive us every day of our lives; for every day we stand in need of pardon: give me, and all Christians, a *forgiving temper*, that we may fulfil this condition of our pardon. Thou art good and merciful in forgiving us: grant we may be so to others; remembering our own infirmities. And may we all live in the same *charitable temper*, in which we hope and desire to die.

*And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

O God and Father, who hatest iniquity, and knowest our infirmities, leave us not to the *malice and power* of the evil one, the devil, to deal with us as he pleaseth;—nor to *ourselves*, and to our own corrupt hearts and lusts, lest we rashly run into temptation. Keep us out of the way of temptations, and under the protection of thy good Spirit: suffer us not to be surprised by them, nor tempted above what we are able to bear. Give us grace to resist them, and to watch and pray daily, that we enter not into temptation.

*For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

The whole creation is thine, and under thy government. Thine is the *power*: thou canst do whatsoever we pray for. Thou canst cause thy *name* to be sanctified in all the earth, and set up thy kingdom in all the world, and in our hearts;—thou canst cause *thy will to be done on earth as it is in heaven*: and incline us all to submit to it. Thou canst give all things needful both for our souls and for our bodies. Thou, and thou alone, canst *forgive* us our sins, and dispose us to forgive one another: Thou canst secure us in the day of temptation, and deliver us from the power of the devil. To Thee, to Thee alone, be glory to all eternity.

### MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS,

*For Families and Particular Persons.*

MORNING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

*Let some one of the Family that can read, say devoutly what followeth, the rest attending.*

THE Lord hath brought us safe to the beginning of this day; let us therefore give thanks for this and for all his mercies.

Let us pray that we may live in the fear of God, and continue in love and charity with our neighbors:

That his Holy Spirit may direct and rule our hearts, teaching us what we ought to do and what to avoid:

That the grace of God may ever be with us to support us in all danger, and carry us through all temptations:

That the Lord may bless all our honest endeavors and make us content with what his providence shall order for us:

And that we may continue his faithful servants this day, and unto our lives' end.

For all which blessings let us devoutly pray.

*Then all devoutly kneeling, let one say,*

O God, by whom the whole world is governed and preserved, we give thee humble thanks for thy fatherly care over us, beseeching thee to make us truly sensible of thy mercies, and thankful for them.

Give us grace that we may walk as in thy sight, making a conscience of our ways; and, fearing to offend thee, may never fall into the sins we have repented of.

Enable us to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; to *follow* the motions of thy good Spirit; to be *serious* and *holy* in our lives; *true* and *just* in our dealings; *watchful* over our thoughts, words, and actions; *diligent* in our business: and *temperate* in all things.

May thy blessing be upon our persons—upon our labors,—upon our substance,—and upon all that be long to us.

Give us grace, that we may honestly improve all the talents which thou hast committed to our trust: and that no worldly business, no worldly pleasures, may divert us from the thoughts of the life to come.

Make us sensible and thankful for all thy favors; and mindful of the wants of others.

By thy mighty power defend us in all the assaults of our enemies; and grant that this day we fall into no sin; neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that which is righteous in thy sight.

May our gracious God give us what is needful for us, and grace not to abuse his favors; and withal give us contented minds!

Give us in this world the knowledge of his truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

Hear us, O God, not according to our weak understandings, but according to the full meaning of that *form of prayer* which Jesus Christ has taught us.

Our Father which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

*On Sunday Morning, let the following Prayer be added to your daily Prayer.*

O LORD, who hast consecrated this good day to thy service, give us grace so to observe it, that it may be the *beginning* of an happy week to us, and that none of thy judgments may fall upon us for profaning it. Fix in our hearts this great truth, that *here* we have *no abiding place*, that we may seriously and timely provide for another life; and grant that this great concern may make us very desirous to *learn* our duty; and to *do* what thou requirest of us. And blessed be God, that we have *Churches* to go to; that we have *time* to serve our Creator; that we have *Pastors* to teach us! The Lord prosper their labors, and give us grace to profit by them; that they and we may enjoy an everlasting Sabbath with thy saints in heaven, for Jesus Christ's sake!

#### EVENING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

*Let one standing, read, or say devoutly what followeth: the rest of the family attending.*

By the favor of God we are come to the evening

of this day: and we are so much nearer our latter end.

Let us seriously consider this, and pray God to fit us for the hour of death.

Let us with penitent hearts beseech him to pardon our sins; and to deliver us from the evils which we have justly deserved.

Let us resolve to amend where we have done amiss, and pray God that his grace may ever be with us.

And that we may be safe under his protection, who alone can defend us from the power of darkness.

For all which blessings let us devoutly pray.

*Then all devoutly kneeling, let one say,*

O Lord, and heavenly Father, we acknowledge thy great goodness to us, in sparing us when we deserved punishment; in *giving* us the necessities of this life; and in *setting* before us the happiness of a better.

The merciful God *pardon* our offences; *correct* and amend what is amiss in us; that as we grow in years, we may grow in grace; and the nearer we come to our latter end, we may be the better prepared for it!

*In the midst of life we are in death.*

Lord, grant that these thoughts may make us careful how we live, that we may escape the bitter pains of eternal death.

Take from us all *ignorance*, *hardness of heart*, and too much carefulness for the things of this life.

Make us an *household* fearing God, submitting ourselves to thy good pleasure, and putting our whole trust in thy mercy.

May God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, bless such as are put in authority, that they may govern with truth and justice; and that we, whose duty it is to obey, may do it for conscience sake!

Grant that true religion and piety may be secured and countenanced amongst us; and that *impiety*, *profaneness*, and *infidelity* may effectually be discouraged, that thy judgments may not fall upon this sinful nation.

Continue to us, and all the reformed Church, the means of grace and salvation. Cause that the saving truths of the Gospel may be received in all the world; and that *Christians* may not content themselves with *shadows of religion*, but endeavor after *that holiness*, without which no man must see the Lord.

Remember, gracious God, for good, all those that are over us in the *Lord*, who watch for our souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy. We commend unto thy tender compassion all that are in error, and sincerely seek the truth:—All such as are destitute of necessary means of instruction:—All that are engaged in sinful courses, that they may have grace and strength to break their bonds:—All that labor under trials and afflictions:—All sick and dying persons, that they may omit nothing that is necessary to make their peace with thee, before they die:—And also such as never pray for themselves, that they may see, before it be too late, the danger of living without God in the world. Vouchsafe unto us an interest in the prayers of thy Holy Church throughout the world, which have been this day offered to the throne of grace.

Let thy blessing, O Lord, be with us;—Defend us from all perils and dangers of this night: and grant that when we depart this life, we may rest in peace, and in hope of a blessed resurrection through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HEAR us, O merciful God, not according to our weak understanding, but according to the full



meaning of that *form of prayer* which Jesus Christ has taught us.

*Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

On Sunday Evening, let the following Prayer be added to your daily Prayers.

ALMIGHTY God, by whom all things were made and preserved, give us hearts to know, and grace to consider this, that we may cheerfully commit ourselves, and all that belongs to us, to thy merciful care; that we may ever look up to thee for what we want; be thankful for thy favors; never resist thy dealings with us, or neglect the means of grace which thy providence affords us. Blessed be God, who giveth us what is ever best for us: who keepeth us from dangers, and hath provided for us better than all our works can deserve! The good Lord make us mindful of our duty, that as we often hear how we ought to walk, and to please God, we may continue to do so unto our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## PRAYERS FOR PARTICULAR PERSONS BOTH MORNING AND EVENING.

### IN THE MORNING,

*Consider the danger of going into an evil world, and then you will never fail to pray for the blessing, protection, and grace of God, every morning of your life.*

#### THE PRAYER.

Psal. cxvi. *What shall I render unto the Lord, for his mercies renewed unto me every morning?*—I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay my vows unto the Most High.

And may God accept of my most hearty thanks for my preservation and refreshment, and for all the blessings of the night past, and of my life past!

Possess my soul, gracious God, with such a sense of this thy goodness, and of my dependence upon thee for life, health, prosperity, and comfort, that it may be my delight, as it is my duty and interest, to serve and obey thee.

And that I may do this with a quiet mind, forgive me the sins of which my conscience is afraid; and avert the judgments which I have justly deserved.

Give me grace that I may continue in thy fear all the day long: and that I may live and act as having thee, O God, the constant witness of my conduct; and that it may be the purpose of my soul never to offend thee wilfully.

May thy restraining grace preserve me from the temptations of an evil world, from the frailty and corruption of my own nature, and from the evil principles and practices of the age we live in!

Possess my heart with a sincere love for thee, and for all mankind; and grant that I may have this comfortable and sure proof of thy love abiding in me, that I may study to please thee, and keep thy commandments.

Give me a tender compassion for the wants and miseries of my neighbor, that thou mayest have compassion upon me, O God.

*In all my ways, I do acknowledge thee.* Do thou, O Lord, direct my paths, and teach me to guide my affairs, my designs, my words and actions, with charity, discretion, justice and piety.

Show me the way that I should walk in, and give me grace to follow the conduct of thy good Spirit, that I may do my duty, in that state of life in which thy providence has placed me.

Let me ever remember, *that the night cometh when no man can work*; and that now is the time in which to provide for eternity.

Grant, gracious God, that no worldly pleasure, no worldly business, may ever make me lose the sight of death, or forget the dangers that surround me.

Fill my heart with the dread of the punishments prepared for impenitent sinners, and my soul with a sense of the blessings which will be the sure reward of all them that love thee, and obey thy laws.

Hear me, O heavenly Father, not according to my imperfect petitions, but according to the full meaning of that holy prayer which thy beloved Son hath taught us.

Our Father, which art in heaven: hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation: But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

## PRAYERS FOR PARTICULAR PERSONS.

### EVENING PRAYER.

*Every thoughtful person, before he lieth down to sleep, will put himself under the protection of God, who giveth his angels charge concerning his elect, to preserve them from the powers of darkness, from the dangers of the night, and from all sad accidents.*

That it hath pleased God to add another day to the years of my life, and that he hath kept me from the dangers of an evil world:—for these, and for all his mercies from day to day bestowed upon me, I bless his good and gracious providence, most earnestly beseeching him to pardon my offences of the day past, and to grant that they may never rise up in judgment against me.

Lord, the frailty of man, without thee, cannot but fall; in all temptations therefore I beseech thee to succor me, that no sin may ever get the dominion over me.

Give me a salutary dread of the corruption of my own heart. Make me truly sensible of the end of sin, and mindful of my own infirmities and backslidings.

Vouchsafe unto all sinners a true sense of their unhappy state, a fear of thy judgments, and grace, and strength to break their bonds.

Enlighten my soul with saving truth: correct me in mercy, and reduce me when I go astray. Make me ever mindful of my latter end, and fix in my heart a lively sense of the happiness and misery of the world to come.

May the thoughts of death mortify in me all pride and covetousness, and a love for this world: and may my firm belief of a judgment to come, make me ever careful to please thee, my Lord and Judge, that I may find mercy at that day!

Grant that I may lie down in sleep with the same charitable and forgiving temper, in which I desire and hope to die.

And may the Almighty God take me, and all that belongs to me, under his gracious and powerful protection! May he give his angels charge concerning us, and keep us in perpetual peace and safety, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

St. John xvi. 23. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

In thy name, O Jesus, and in the full meaning of the words which thou hast taught us, I pray God, for thy sake, to hear me, and to give me what is most convenient for me.

Our Father, which art in heaven: hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done

in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation: But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

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# THE MARYS;

Q. 14

## THE BEAUTY OF FEMALE HOLINESS

BY ROBERT PHILIP,

OF MADERLY CHAPEL.

"Holy women of old."—*St. Peter.*

"There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and Mary the wife of Cleophas,  
and Mary of Magdala."—*St. John.*



## DEDICATION AND PREFACE.

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TO  
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS  
THE PRINCESS VICTORIA,  
THESE ESSAYS  
ON FEMALE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE,  
ARE,  
BY HER GRACIOUS PERMISSION,  
DEDICATED,  
WITH  
SERVENT PRAYER THAT HER ROYAL HIGHNESS  
MAY EXEMPLIFY  
ALL  
"THE BEAUTIES OF HOLINESS,"  
IN THE COURT AND TO HER COUNTRY,  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.

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### PREFACE.

THIS "CLOSET MANUAL" has a twofold peculiarity. It is addressed exclusively to Females; because the author believes that *general* appeals on the subject of Sin and Holiness are not well adapted to the conscience of the sex, nor so faithful as they

seem. Its style, too, is occasionally peculiar; because he thinks that PARABLE and ALLEGORY are legitimate weapons in "the defence of the Gospel." He has, therefore, attempted to give Oriental forms to old truths, whenever he found it difficult to say, in ordinary language, all that he wished to suggest to the female mind. He has also given that prominence to "the *beauty* of holiness," which it has in Scripture, in common with the nature and necessity of holiness. This plan and purpose will be adhered to in the succeeding volumes of THE LADY'S CLOSET LIBRARY.

The Author's appeal is to the Mothers and Daughters in British "Israel;" they must be both his patrons and judges, if this well-meant experiment succeed.

*Newington Green, May 24, 1835.*

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# THE MARYS:

OR,

## THE BEAUTY OF FEMALE HOLINESS.

### No. I.

#### A MOTHER'S HINDERANCES DULY WEIGHED.

It is worthy of special observation, that, whilst the earliest prophecies concerning the Church of Christ on earth foretell, chiefly, the *numbers* of his disciples, the latter prophecies abound in descriptions of their spiritual and moral character. Thus, when God pointed Abraham to the stars of heaven and the sands on the sea shore, as emblems of the Saviour's offspring, it was only their innumerable "multitude" and not their beauty or purity, that was appealed to: but when God pointed David to the "dew-drops of the morning," as an emblem of the offspring of Christ, he left their numbers to be *inferred*, and confined the attention of David to "the beauty" of their "holiness." Psalm cx. The reason for this difference in the revelation of the same fact is obvious; the day of Christ had just been shown to David as a "day of power," which should make people "willing" to follow Christ, and as a period of gracious and unchangeable priesthood, which should encourage them to follow holiness; whereas neither of these facts was fully disclosed to Abraham, when he saw the day of Christ afar off. What was shown to him was, chiefly, the *certainly* of that day, and not the glory of it: and therefore its results were given in numbers, not in characteristics.

This illustration will apply to the prophecies at large. Just in proportion as they unveil the glory and grace of the Saviour to the Church, they exhibit or enforce the necessity and beauty of holiness. The clearer lights they shed upon the mediatorial way of acceptance with God, the stronger lights they pour upon the "narrow way which leadeth to everlasting life."

This is an interesting fact. It leads us to look back among the first disciples of Christ, who followed him in this "regeneration of life," to notice how far they justified the prophecies, which thus "went before," concerning the beauty of their holiness. Did his first offspring, "the dew of his youth," resemble the dew of the morning in character and spirit? Was he at all glorified in his saints then, as well as "admired by them?" Now, so far as moral character is one of the essential beauties of holiness, his first disciples were, in general, eminently holy. Whatever they may have been before they left all and followed Christ, afterwards they were emphatically virtuous and upright. For a long time, indeed, their views of the person, work, and kingdom of Christ were very worldly, and even their spirit was ambitious as well as rash; but their general habits were both circumspect and devo-

tional; even their enemies "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" to some good purpose, so far as exemplary conduct was the effect of their intercourse with him.

Did you ever observe, whilst reviewing the character of the Saviour's early friends, that his *female* followers soon acquired great beauty of holiness under the influence of his word and example?—There is, indeed, a complete halo of loveliness around the character and spirit of John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" and there is much sublimity about Peter, notwithstanding all his faults; and the whole eleven, compared with even the best of the Jews of that time, were emphatically "holy men:" but still, "whatsoever things are pure, and whatsoever things are lovely," abound most among the *women* of Judea and Galilee, who followed him. There is an exquisite and touching beauty about the holiness of the Marys of Bethlehem and Bethany especially, which eclipses even the excellence of the "holy women of old." We almost forget Abraham's Sarah in the presence of Joseph's Mary, and lose sight of Jacob's Rachel whilst Mary of Bethany is before us. Of them we must say, and even the world will respond the exclamation, "Many daughters have done virtuously," but ye have "excelled them all." Give them of "the fruit" of their own hands, and their "works will praise them in the gates."

It was not without special design, that the Holy Spirit transmitted to posterity so much of the history and character of these distinguished women: he evidently intended them to be *models* of female holiness to their sex. Hence he inspired both Elizabeth and the angel Gabriel to "hail" Mary of Bethlehem as "highly favored and blessed among women," and taught the evangelists to depict her peculiar excellences: and not less care did he take to embody the character and embalm the memory of Mary of Bethany. No angel, indeed, pronounced her eulogy, but, what was far better, "Jesus loved Mary," and predicted that her love to him should be "told as a memorial of her" wheresoever the "Gospel should be preached throughout the whole world."

These are not accidents, nor mere incidents in the sacred history; Mary of Bethlehem, like the star of Bethlehem, is evidently placed in the firmament of the Church, as a leading star, to guide wise women, as well as wise men, to Christ, and to teach both how to ponder his sayings, and revere his authority, and cleave to his cross. In like manner, Mary of Bethany, like her own "alabaster box of



precious ointment," is so fully disclosed in all her principles, and so fully poured out in all her spirit before us by the sacred writers, that there can be no doubt but her lovely character was intended to be "as ointment poured forth," inspiring, as well as pleasing. Like the "good part, which shall never be taken from her," the beauty of her holiness can never be uninfluential on either sex, whilst it is the duty of both "to sit at the feet of Jesus," hearing his word; and that will be equally duty and delight in heaven, as well as on earth,

"While breath or being last,  
Or immortality endures."

For who, that knows any thing of vital and experimental religion, has not said, in effect, both when remembering past attainments, and when anticipating future progress and enjoyment,

"O that I might for ever sit  
Like Mary, at the Master's feet?"

Thus the eye of a Christian, of either sex, and of whatever sphere in life or godliness, reposes upon Mary of Bethany, whenever it searches for an example of child-like docility, or of angel-like meekness, in learning of Christ. The spirit of a Christian takes *her* position at the feet of Christ, and tries to hang upon his lips with *her* zeal and zest, whenever it is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The soul feels instinctively that this is the only way to "be filled" or refreshed by his presence. Accordingly, we have never found much enjoyment or profit, except when we have really sat at "the feet" of Christ, hearing his word for ourselves.—Neither in the sanctuary, nor in the closet, have we become holier or happier, when we did not try to place ourselves in the position and spirit of Mary.

It will be seen at once, from this application of the example of Mary, that I regard both her place at the feet of Jesus, and her conduct in anointing his feet with "spikenard," as only illustrations of her habitual spirit and general character. Nothing is farther from my intention, because nothing could be more foreign to her real character, than to represent her as merely a meek, contemplative, and retiring Christian. She was, indeed, all this, but she was much more: she was as prompt as Martha in going out of the house to meet Jesus when he sent for her, and in serving him in the house when service was really wanted. It was not wanted when Martha said so. If she had stood in real need of assistance from Mary, the Saviour would not have continued, nor even begun to preach, in the house of Lazarus then: much less would he have commended Mary for sitting still, if she had been neglecting domestic duties. The character of Mary should, therefore, be judged, not by this instance of contrast with Martha's, but by the conduct of Jesus. Now, He certainly would not have thrown his immortal shield so promptly and fully over it, if sloth or selfishness, the love of ease, or the dislike of household duties, had been part of her

character. From all we know of the Saviour, we may be quite sure that he would have reproved her himself, had she been either idle or negligent.

They are but very superficial observers, who seize upon the contrast of the moment between these sisters, to make out, that Mary was chiefly an amiable *Nunn-like* being, who was fonder of contemplative piety than of practical duty. This is a very common opinion; but it is utterly at variance with fact, however appearances may seem to justify it. Even appearances are against it; for nothing is so prominent upon the surface of the case, as the Saviour's approbation of Mary's character. They are, therefore, at *issue* with both His judgment and testimony, who insinuate the charge or suspicion of *undomestic* habits against this holy woman. There is nothing to warrant such an imputation. She sat at the feet of Jesus upon this occasion, because Jesus thought proper to open his lips as a minister, when he visited her house as a guest. Besides, His visits to Bethany were the real *sabbaths* of the family. Only then, had they the opportunity of hearing the glorious Gospel in all the fulness of its blessing: and as the opportunity did not occur often, it could not be too fully improved whilst it lasted. Thus, there is no more reason to think Mary inactive or undomestic, because she sat whilst Martha served with unnecessary bustle, than to suspect that those women, who sanctify the Sabbath most in the house of God, are least attentive to the affairs of their own houses. There is, perhaps, no better test of good domestic management all the week at home, than regularity and punctuality of attendance on public worship on the Sabbath. Those who are soonest and oftenest at the feet of Jesus on his own day, are certainly not idle or irregular on other days. It is because they are active, and act on *system* through the week, that they can make so much of their Sabbaths.

I thus bring out the real character of Mary, that the beauty of holiness may not be supposed to consist in either mere *morals* or *musings*. There may be much morality, where there is no holiness; and there may be much holiness, where there are no literary tastes or habits. Neither fondness for public hearing, nor the

"Love of lonely musing,"

is any real proof, by itself, of a new heart, or of a right spirit, before God. Great readers (as they are called) are not often the deepest nor the most serious thinkers, even when their reading is of the best kind; and the contemplative recluse, who lives only to think, or who reckons every thing but mental pleasure insipid is actually indulging "the lusts of the mind," instead of growing in grace or holiness. It may sound well, to say of a sweet enthusiast, whose element is solitude, and whose luxury is emotion, "that she is a being who belongs to *another* world; her tastes are all so unearthly, and her sympathies so exalted;" but this is no compliment! Indeed, it is a heavy reflection upon both her heart and conscience. A heart that felt aright, or a con-

science purified by the blood of atonement, would try to *do* good by action, as well as to *get* good by contemplation. No one belongs less to another world (if, by that, heaven is meant) than the being who has neither heart nor hand to be a blessing in this world. Her tastes may be unearthly; but heavenly, they certainly are not. They are not *angel-like*: for, are not all the angels "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" They are not *saint-like*: for all the spirits of the just in heaven take a lively interest in the progress of the kingdom of Christ on earth. And they are any thing but *god-like*: for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and move, as if they had both their bliss and being in the welfare of this world.

How ever did it come to be supposed, in the land of BIBLES, that there was either intellectual greatness, or moral loveliness, around any pensive or sweet recluse, who lives only in and for the ideal world of her own thoughts; whilst the Heathen and Mohammedan world is perishing for lack of knowledge, and the actual world at her door, sinning and suffering unpitied by her?

Those who have no taste for retirement or reading will, but too readily, join in this protest against sentimental seclusion. Those only who have but little time for direct mental improvement, will make a right use of the protest, or even repeat it in a good spirit. They will be glad to hear it. Not, however, because it condemns others, but because it relieves themselves from self-condemnation, by proving to them, from both the letter and spirit of Scripture, that *mausing piety* is not the only nor the best piety. Many who have no inclination to cumber themselves needlessly with many things, like Martha, are yet encumbered with so many things which distract their attention, and absorb their time, that they hastily conclude, or strongly suspect, that they have no real piety, because they are so unlike the Mary of their own imagination, and of popular opinion.—They thus set themselves down as Marthas, (her real character, too, is equally mistaken,) who have not "chosen the good part," nor acquired the "one thing needful." But this is as unnecessary as it is unwise. Wherever real duty fills the hands, or inevitable care the heart, then there is as much holiness, and as much of the real beauty of it too, in doing or suffering the will of God well, as in acts of prolonged devotion, or in efforts of heavenly-mindedness.

This subject is much misunderstood. Indeed, many are afraid to speak out, or even to think freely, on the subject. They are quite dissatisfied with themselves, because they can command so little time for devotional reading and meditation; and yet they do not see how they can command more at present. They see clearly, and feel deeply, that their minds want improvement; that the great salvation deserves more thought than they give to it; that they have not that communion with God which is so desirable, nor that witness of the Spirit which they deem so important; and hence they stand in doubt whether they have any real piety at all.

Now there is some danger, as well as difficulty, in meeting this case; because more want to get rid of such doubts, than those who are so placed and pledged in life, that they have but little spare time. The slothful and the worldly-minded are upon the watch, to lay hold of any thing that would lessen their self-condemnation, or tend to reconcile their habits with their hopes. The allowances to be made for the *real* want of time, they stand ready to snatch at, as excuses for not redeeming time, or for not improving it. The forbearance, and leniency, and sympathy of God towards his poor and afflicted children, are greedily seized and appropriated by slothful servants, and by heedless and heartless professors. For they, too, want to be happy in their own mind, however little they care about holiness. They go to the sanctuary to be comforted, as well as the tried and harassed Christian.

Hence arises danger, as well as difficulty, in meeting, publicly and fully, the case of those who cannot redeem much time, nor always do the good they really wish: the concessions made on their behalf, may be perverted by those who dislike devotional retirement, into an excuse for so multiplying their worldly engagements, as to leave no time for reading or meditation, and but little for prayer itself.—Still, neither the sheep nor the lambs of the Good Shepherd's flock, (who love and long for those green pastures and still waters, without being able to visit them often or continue at them long,) should be left to put the worst interpretation upon their own weakness, however *wandering* sheep may abuse the Shepherd's condescension. He will count as his sheep, and even carry in his bosom, those, who, although they cannot be so often at his feet as they wish, do not try to keep away, nor to get away, from his feet. He will distinguish between those who cannot sit down to hear his voice frequently, because of pressing domestic duties, and those who seldom do so, because they prefer to "hear the voice of strangers." John x. 5.

The real question, therefore, in the case of those who have but little leisure, is,—What engrosses your time? Now, if duties which it would be sinful to omit, fill your hands and your heart all the day long, and even leave you fatigued at night, it will not be laid to your charge, as sin, that you were not much alone with God. You ought not to be much alone, when either a sick-bed or the care of the family requires your presence. Then, "the beauty of holiness" lies in watching and working in a devotional spirit, and not in frequent nor in prolonged visits to the closet. That mother is not unholy, nor inconsistent, who has hardly a moment to herself, from morning till night, owing to the number of her children, or the sickness of her babe. That daughter is not unholy, nor unlike Mary of Bethany, who shares her mother's toils and trials, or soothes the loneliness of an aged and infirm father. That wife is not unholy, nor unlike Mary, who, in order to make her husband's slender income sweeten his home and sustain his credit, works hard all the day. All these things are, indeed, done by



many who care nothing about holiness, and who would not retire to meditate or pray, even if their time were not thus absorbed; and, therefore, the mere doing of these things, apart from its spirit and motives, proves nothing decisive as to the state of the heart before God. Still, it is equally true, on the other hand, that neither the time nor the care expended on these duties disproves the existence of holiness. There is, indeed, no true holiness, where there is no secret devotion; but there may be much of the former, when there is but little time for the latter: yea, the highest beauty of holiness often invests and enshrines the character, whilst the heart of a Christian must depend more upon frequent glances at the throne of grace, than upon formal approaches to it. Then, to go through arduous domestic duty, in a meek and quiet spirit, which breathes prayer, even when busiest; or to watch and minister in the sick chamber, mingling prayer with tenderness and patience, and thus "doing service as unto the Lord," or for his sake, is as decisive of piety, and even "adorns the doctrines" of Christ as much, as any act of devotion, however spiritual, or any enterprise of zeal, however splendid.

There is, perhaps, no practical lesson of godliness so ill understood, as this one. The general sentiment of it is, of course, obvious to any Christian, and the theory of it quite familiar; but, how few enter so fully into the spirit of the maxim, as to keep their piety from declining, or their peace of mind from evaporating, when they have much to do or to endure in their family! Then, it is no uncommon thing for a pious wife, or a widowed mother, to complain that domestic cares have brought a cloud upon all her hopes and evidences of grace, and such deadness and darkness upon her soul, that she seems to herself no longer the same being she was, but like an apostate from faith and godliness. Thus she thinks that she has lost her piety, whilst doing her duty to her family!

And she certainly has lost some of her piety, although not in the sense she means, nor yet to the degree she suspects. She has lost that holy freedom at the throne of grace, which once made her closet the house of God and the gate of heaven; she has lost that power of appropriating the great and precious promises, which once made her Bible so dear; she has lost that control over her own thoughts and feelings, by which she could once concentrate them upon the things which are unseen and eternal, whenever she really tried to pass within the veil of the invisible world; and, above all, she has lost sight of her own warrant and welcome to trust in Christ, which once set and kept every thing right. Now, these are serious losses, and may well be sadly bewailed, and even somewhat feared as to their consequences; for it is not so easy to repair these spiritual injuries, as it is to bring them on. They might all have been kept off, however, if she had studied beforehand the *secret* of blending the spirit of prayer with the efforts of maternal devotedness, and the *art* of turning the duties of life into acts of godliness;

but, having, like many, grown up under the idea, that nothing was really a part of her piety but what was a positive act of religion, and thus being in the habit of estimating her piety more by her delight in divine things, than by her conscientious discharge of ordinary duties, she is, of course, sadly thrown out and disconcerted, whenever the pressure of ordinary duties lessens the sense or lowers the spirit of her religious observances; whereas, had she fully gone into the question of personal holiness at her outset in the divine life, she would have soon discovered that it is the very *beauty* of holiness to do that best which is most wanted at the moment; for even the cradle may be made an altar, and the nursery a little sanctuary, and household duties almost sacramental engagements! But if these things are looked upon as the mere routine of life, or as unfavorable to godliness; and if only the time which can be spared from them is considered *improved* time for eternity, then, of course, there must be a sad sense of declension in piety whenever more time than usual is demanded by them. But why not consider that unusual portion of time which is required in seasons of domestic care, as improved for eternity, as well as the time spent in devotion?—Why not do every thing as service unto God, as well as the things you call service done to him? Surely, if all Christians may eat and drink so as to *glorify* God, Christian mothers may watch and work for their family to the praise of the glory of his grace.

I am not inclined to resolve so many things into satanic influence as some are: there are many of our faults and failings but too easily accounted for by the treachery of our own hearts and the want of consideration: still, I cannot help suspecting that Satan has not a little, yea, much, to do with creating and keeping up the popular notion, that nothing is spiritual religion but spiritual exercises and emotions. Not, indeed, that he is any friend to spirituality of heart or habit: there is nothing he hates so much, or tries more to hinder. He can, however, transform himself into an angel of light, and thus seem to plead for highly spiritual religion, and for extraordinary devotion, whilst, in fact, he is endeavoring to prevent all religion and devotion too.

It is not sin alone, nor worldly pleasures only, that Satan throws false colors over: he can exaggerate the claims of holiness, as well as soften the aspect of sin and folly. He often labors to make out the necessity of too much religion, as well as to prove the sufficiency of too little: I mean, that just as he tries to persuade some that the ceremonial forms of religion are quite enough, or as much as can be expected in our busy world and imperfect state, so he labors to persuade others that nothing amounts to saving piety but a heart all love, a spirit all heavenly, and a character perfectly holy. In like manner, he adapts his wiles to those who see through the fallacy of such extremes; putting it to themselves to say, whether they might not as well do nothing at all in religion, as do so little; whether it would not be less dangerous to make no profession of godliness, than to have only a spark of it

power; or, at least, whether it would not be better to give up prayer entirely, until they can secure more time and composure, than to continue it in the very imperfect way they are now compelled to do?

This is an appeal to the conscience of a harassed mother, which she little suspects to come from the lips of Satan; and yet he is as busy in "taking advantage over" her, whilst thus trying to make her give up what she attempts in religion, as when he beguiled Eve to aim at being god-like in another sense than she was so. At this point, therefore, it is peculiarly necessary to act on the injunction, "Resist the Devil." That cannot be done effectually, however, by any process which does not turn the duties of life into acts of godliness. He will not "flee from you," whilst you merely analyze and scrutinize his wiles and devices; he will try new fiery darts as fast as you defeat the old, by mere arguments; he will stand at your right hand, resisting you, whilst you only resist him by detecting him.—When did he leave the Saviour? Not until he saw that nothing could divert him from the "work the Father gave him to do." Satan tried first to set him against that work, by the poverty it involved; then to set him upon a new process of doing it; and then, to engage him in other work, altogether different; but all in vain. Satan found nothing in the Saviour averse to the will of God, notwithstanding all the labor, privation, and suffering which the great work of redemption involved. "Then the devil left him, and angels ministered unto him." And by no other process than that of adhering to the work God has given us to do, can we resist the devil so as to make him flee from us.

I do not forget (I never more remembered or admired than at this moment) that Christ resisted temptation by opposing to it the express word of God. It was, however, not the quotations of Scripture, but the practical purpose for which they were quoted, that discomfited the tempter. The Saviour drew upon the word of God, that he might not draw back from the word of God; he wielded weapons from the armory of heaven, that he might go steadfastly through whatever the Father had given him to do or endure on earth.

I know well that there is no parallel between our work and the work of Christ; but still, our sphere, and its duties and hardships, are the appointment of God, as well as Christ's were so. It is not by accident that one mother has much to do, and another much to suffer, and a third much both to do and endure; these heavy crosses are as really heavenly appointments as the cross of Christ was, although not for the same purpose. Accordingly, in some things, we recognise, and even act on this principle, in express imitation of the Saviour's example. When the cup of bereavement or affliction is put into our hands, we try to say, like him, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Not my will, but thine be done." Thus we really attempt to turn what we suffer much from, into an occasion of serving God well, and for

submitting to him meekly. We regard this as true godliness, and try to make it holy submission.

Now, why not view every duty of life in the same light, and both go to it, and through it, as service required by God, and acceptable to God? Perhaps you find it difficult to conceive how some of your domestic duties could be invested with any thing like a spiritual or holy character: you may almost be inclined to smile at first, at the idea of giving them a religious aspect; and as to throwing the beauty of holiness around all the details of life, it may seem to you a profanation of divine things even to think of such a mixture. Be not frightened or prejudiced, however, by words or fancies.—God himself does many things similar to those you have to do: if you clothe your children, He clothes the earth with grass and flowers: if you feed your children, He feeds the young ravens when they cry: if you watch night and day, occasionally, over the couch of a sick child, afraid to stir from its side, or take your eye off it for a moment, He never slumbers nor sleeps in watching over his suffering children: God even "sits, as a refiner," by the furnace of his backsliding children. If you try to manage well, and to make the best of whatever happens, for the sake of those who love you and look up to you, He also makes "all things work together for good to them that love him." Thus God counts nothing beneath him, nor derogatory to his character, which is really required by any of his creatures, or needful in any part of his creation. He doeth all things, little and great, ordinary and extraordinary, in the same god-like manner; acting always in character, whether he sustain a sparrow or create a world. He doeth all things in heaven and earth, indeed, without quitting his throne, or being disquieted by the multiplicity and weight of his engagements; but still, God occupies himself with our mean affairs, as willingly and fully as with the affairs of angels or the interests of the universe. Nothing in his glorious holiness holds him back from doing ordinary things well, because they are but ordinary things: he acts like himself, whether displaying the tenderness of a Parent or the majesty of a Judge, and carries out his great principles into all his operations.

If, then, He be not less holy, nor less beautiful in holiness, whilst attending to the minutest claims of his universal family, why may not "holiness unto the Lord be written" upon all the details of your family duty?

I am not pleading for what is called "mixing up religion with every thing," if by that is meant *talking* about religion whilst transacting the business of life, or giving a religious turn to every conversation. This is neither necessary nor wise, as it is usually conducted by those who try it most: indeed, they are thus often guilty of "casting pearls before swine," and more likely to create prejudices against religion than to commend it. Even their own piety is in danger of being suspected of sinister design or of sanctimonious pretence, by this forced intermixture of sacred and common things. So far, there-



fore, as speaking perpetually about religion, or about every thing in religious phrases, is concerned, I have no sympathy with the habit, and see none of the beauty of holiness in it. I have, however, quite as little respect for both the vulgar and the sentimental proverb—"Business in its place, and religion in its own place." That really means, in the lips of those who use it most, "they are distinct things, therefore keep them separate;" a maxim equally treasonable and untrue! They are, indeed, *made* distinct things; but who made them so? Not God: he joins with the injunction, "not slothful in business," the commandment "Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." He says, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." It sounds ill, and looks ill, therefore, when men, professing to be Christians, say that they give themselves to business and religion in turn, and never try both at once. Such men do not understand the spirit of true religion, whatever adepts they may be in business.

I say this, however, far more in pity than in blame; for, as many godly women have grown up in the habit of going through their domestic duties, without ever imagining that there is any godliness in performing them well, so, many men, who have the root of the matter in them, have grown up in the habit of regarding their public duties in trade as no part of their religion. They, too, count nothing piety but what is done in the closet of devotion, and in the house of God, except what they may occasionally do in visiting the afflicted, or in relieving the poor; and thus both sexes confirm each other in the pernicious opinion, that ordinary duty is no proof of vital godliness.

This is a pernicious opinion, however well meant by some who hold it. Wherever, indeed, there is no devotion, nor any relish for divine things, or, when the soul and salvation are neglected through the attention given to worldly things, no diligence nor honor in business is religion in any sense. The industry of the bee, or the economy of the ant, might as well be called piety. It is, however, equally true, on the other hand, that idleness and dishonesty disprove all pretensions to godliness: there must, therefore, be something in the very nature of the ordinary duties of life not unfavorable to vital godliness, seeing the conscientious discharge of them is thus essential to the proof of its sincerity. Why, then, should a pious man allow himself to think that he is only serving the world during the hours and bustle of business? Why should he ever speak or dream of leaving his religion at home when he goes out into the world? He does not leave behind him his conscience, nor his sense of accountability, nor his regard to truth, nor his respect for his good name, nor his holy fear of disgracing his profession: these follow him, like his shadow, into all the walks of public life. Not all the anxieties nor distractions of his business can make him lose sight of his great moral principles; and yet he says that he "left his religion at home." He means, of course, his penitence, his spirituality of mind, and his devotion; these are what he drops

when he quits his closet and the family altar; and certainly these are things which cannot be much combined with worldly affairs. I will even readily grant that it would not argue much good sense, to attach much importance to the hasty glances or the passing thoughts of divine things, which may take place in the course of the day; these should not rank very high in the scale of evidences by which a Christian tests the reality of his conversion, or the safety of his state for eternity. Yea, I will go farther, and allow that if he cannot prove his faith without the scanty items of such evidence, he cannot prove it with them: they are too few and feeble to lay much stress upon them.

These concessions do not, however, militate against my argument: it is just because they prove so little, that I advocate the necessity and propriety of going to business, day after day, in a spirit which shall make it all one embodied proof of true holiness. Now, it would be so, by going to it and through it, as a penitent before God, as a debtor before Christ, as a dependant before the Holy Spirit. A Christian man is all this; and by a little pains he might carry the consciousness of all this as regularly into the world as he carries his honesty or his integrity. He need no more lose sight of what the hope of eternal life lead him to be and do, than of what his credit and subsistence require of him. It is just as possible to act as a redeemed man, as to act as an honest man. And here would be the advantage of acting in this spirit—instead of coming home from business with all its deadening and distracting influence aggravated by the suspicion of having been serving the world only, he would have the consciousness that he had been "doing service as unto God, and not as unto man;" and thus the conviction that neither the time nor the thought he had given to his public duties, had lessened his hold upon the divine favor, or drawn any judicial veil between him and the divine presence. Whereas the Christian who really leaves the spirit of religion at home, because he deems it useless or impossible to mind any thing but business during the hours of business, cannot so easily resume that spirit after the tear and wear of the day. He feels as if all he had been doing was somewhat sinful in itself, because it is so deadening and carnalizing in its influence. The consequence is, he is often afraid to go alone with God, after having been long and much absorbed in the world.

These remarks, although a digression in one sense, are not at all so in another. They will account in some measure for the false view you have taken of domestic duties. You have so often heard a pious father, husband, or brother, complain of the unhinging and deadening effect of the cares of business on their minds, and have so often felt that family duties and cares had precisely the same effect on your own mind, that you, like them, are too much in the habit of considering the duties of life as drawbacks or hinderances to godliness. I am, therefore, very anxious to lead you into the Scriptural views of this subject, not only on your own

account, but for the sake of those whose spiritual welfare is dear to you; for, without saying a word in the way of counsel, or even of explanation, you may so illustrate the great truth that "all things may be done to the glory of God," as to convince your father, your husband, or your brother, that business may be made the handmaid of religion in the world, as well as at home.

Are you a mother? How holiness might beam and breathe in all your maternal duties and cares! Nay, do not smile in scorn nor in pity at this fond wish! I no more forget than you do, that there is noise, nonsense, vexation, almost drudgery at times, in the nursery; your patience, as well as your strength, is often tried by your children; you occasionally find it no easy matter to keep your temper, or even to keep up your spirits, amongst them.—Were they not your own children, you feel as if you never could go through what you have to do and endure. Now, I do not wonder at this; my only wonder is, how mothers can work and watch, nourish and cherish, as they do! There must be a magnetic charm, which fathers do not feel, in the sweet thought—"They are my own children." We, too, love them sincerely and strongly, as you well know; but, somehow, we could neither do for them nor bear with them, in your spirit, nor with your perseverance. A sleepless night or two quite exhausts our patience: the reflection, "They are my own children," does not electrify us as it does you, except when their life is in imminent danger. Well, just carry out this electric thought in your own maternal spirit, and observe how you feel whilst you say, in reference to their souls, "My own children! They will be mine for ever, both here and hereafter. Nothing can dissolve all my connection with them.—We may be widely separated on earth; we shall be divided by death, and it is not yet certain that we shall be all reunited in heaven: but wherever they are, in time or eternity, they will be my family. I can never forget them. Until death, I shall instinctively look after them, wherever their lot may be cast: at the judgment-seat I shall look for them, whether they stand on the right hand or on the left: through eternity I shall remember them, wherever I myself am, or whatever I may be." Neither heaven nor hell can obliterate parental recollections; fathers and mothers will feel themselves to be fathers and mothers

"Whilst immortality endures."

These are solemn considerations. Do not, however, shrink from them; they may become equally sweet and sublime. Even already, they have thrown your spirit in upon your maternal responsibilities, and far out amongst your parental prospects in both worlds. That glance of solicitude you darted through the assembled universe, in search of your children, when you realized the judgment-seat, proves that you are not "without natural affection," nor destitute of spiritual sympathy. And that breathless pause you made, whilst supposing your-

self looking all around heaven for them, reveals to you how dear their eternal safety is to your heart, and how much their presence would heighten your happiness, even in the presence of God and the Lamb. What fine preparation these glimpses of the great white throne of judgment, and of the glorious high throne of heaven, are for maternal prayer at "the throne of grace!" Whilst the former thrones are looked at, the latter cannot be overlooked. You feel through all your soul, that any mother, if allowed, would pray for her children at the former thrones, if prayer could avail there: and will you neglect to pray for *your* children at that throne, where alone it is allowed or useful? If you do neglect this duty, it is not likely that God would gratify you with either the company, or a sight, of your children in heaven, even if both they and you should be in heaven. But a prayerless mother in heaven—is an anomaly. Her children are more likely to miss *her* there, than she is to miss them; or, both to meet in hell!

Neither, however, need miss the other in heaven. Both may meet in one mansion of glory, if both mingle their prayers at the throne of grace. Heaven is not so inaccessible or uncertain to families, as *families*, as some seem to fear. We must not judge from appearances in this matter. Heaven, as it is revealed in the Bible, is a family-house, where "it may be well with us and our children for ever."—God has said so. We must not, therefore, regulate our opinion of His good will towards the families of those that fear him, by the way in which some of their children turn out. The real question is,—Did those parents take God's *plan*, in both its letter and spirit, for training up their children? That all godly parents have done something, yea much, for their families, compared with what the ungodly do, there can be no doubt. But how few even believe—that there is a positive certainty of *success*, pledged by God, to all who bring up their children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord!"—The generality treat this promise as a lottery, in which there are more blanks than prizes. 'Thus both the faithfulness and the sincerity of God are dishonored. But, Mothers! it is as true now, as when Paul said to the jailor at Philippi, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The jailor had asked only, "What shall I do to be saved?" Paul, however, would not allow him to confine the question to himself. The promise is to children as well as to parents; and therefore the Apostle answered the question so as to include both.

If these preliminary hints awaken any curiosity, or win any confidence, towards the designs of this little book, you will not throw it aside just yet; nor wonder if, before resuming this part of the subject, I take great pains to secure the attention and confidence of daughters, as well as of mothers. Read the next chapter, therefore, on their account, or to your daughters; and do give weight to whatever is experimentally true in it, by setting your "seal" to its truth.



## No. II.

## A DAUGHTER'S PRINCIPLES ANALYZED.

In addressing you, "I will (first) incline my ear unto a Parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp" of ALLEGORY. And, should I close my appeal in the same way, you will forgive me. Both Rachael and Miriam are real characters, and will, I fear, recognise themselves: but you, I hope, will try in vain to identify either.

Both young men and maidens venerated the aged SHESHBAZZAR, and vied with each other in honoring his gray hairs as "a crown of glory." He was a *second* conscience to all the youth of Beersheba, who studied to maintain a good conscience towards God or man. When the young men looked upon the daughters of the Canaanites, and thought of allying themselves with "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," they remembered that Sheshbazzar would not bless the forbidden union; and turned their attention to the daughters of the Covenant. When the maidens of Beersheba were fascinated by the garb and bearing of the sons of Belial, they felt that they could not meet the eye of the holy Patriarch, and drew their veils close around them in the streets. Thus all the plans of the young had a tacit reference to his opinion, and the hope of his approbation and benediction mingled with their brightest prospects. "*What will Sheshbazzar think of me?*" was a question, which, however simple in itself, disentangled whole webs of sophistry, and unmasked the most plausible appearances. It revealed the secrets of the heart to the conscience, and the frauds of the conscience to the judgment. It was, indeed, a simple question; but it searched the reins like "the candle of the Lord,"—because all who reflected, felt that the good old man could have no object but their good; and that whatever influence he had acquired over them, was won, not by stratagem, but by weight and worth of character. It was the spell of his fine spirit, which, like the mantle of Elijah, cast upon the ploughman of Abelmeholah, drew them after him as with "cords of love." Amongst the daughters of the Covenant, who listened to his wisdom, and loved his approbation, Rachel was the most enthusiastic. She was modest as the lily of the valley, but sensitive as the tremulous dewdrops which gemmed it. Like the clouds of the spring upon Carmel or Hermon, she wept and smiled in the same hour. Her spirit soared at times like the eagle of Engedi, until lost in the light which is full of glory; and, anon, it drooped like the widowed dove in the gloomy avenues of Heshbon and Kedron. She was alternately glowing and freezing; too high or too low. In all things, but in her modest gentleness, she was the creature of circumstances. Even in Religion, she had no *fixed* principles. She was feelingly alive to its beauties, but dead to its real spirit. Whilst it inspired thoughts which breathed, and words which burned, with immortality, she was enraptured with it: but when its oracles or ordinances led to thoughts of penitence, or words of humiliation, she had no sympathy of spirit with them. She wept, indeed, over her *fallen*

nature; but not because it was fallen from the moral image of Jehovah. The loss of intellectual power, not the loss of holy feeling, grieved her. She felt deeply mortified, because she could not maintain all the mental elevation of a rational being; and she thought her mortification, *humility!* She deplored the weakness and waywardness of her mind, in the strongest terms of self-abasement; but not because her mind disliked secret prayer and self-examination. She lamented that she had so little communion with God; but it was not the communion of a child with a Father, nor of a penitent with a Saviour, but the communion of a poet with the God of nature—of a finite Spirit with the Infinite Spirit—that had charms for her. She admired the prophets; but not for the holiness which rendered them temples meet for the Holy Spirit to dwell in, and speak from; but because of their mysterious dignity, as the ambassadors of Heaven. She gloried in the altars and mercy-seat of the temple; not as they were types of salvation by the atonement of the promised Messiah, but as they were the seat and shrine of the cloud of glory and the sacred fire.

All this Sheshbazzar saw and lamented. But Rachel was gentle, and he loved her; she had genius, and he admired her. Men of *one* idea thought her mad; and men with *half* a heart deemed her a mere visionary. Sheshbazzar regarded her as a young vine among the rocks of the Dead Sea, whose grapes are embittered by the bitumen of the soil; and he hoped, by transplanting and pruning, to displace its poisonous juices. But the difficulty was, to convince her, that even her *virtues* were like the grapes of Gomorrah, unfit to be presented "before the Lord, in the waive-offering of the first fruits," or to be mingled in "the drink-offering." They were, indeed, so; for, like the vines of Gomorrah, she bore fruit to herself, not to the glory of God.—Her morality was high-toned; but only because she reckoned immortality beneath the dignity of female character. Her taste was simple; but only because she deemed follies unworthy of her talents. Her sympathies were prompt and tender; but they were indulged more for the luxury of deep emotion, than for the sake of doing good. What became her—as a woman, and a woman whom Sheshbazzar reckoned "one of a thousand," was both the reason and the rule of her excellences. She never prayed for grace to sanctify or sustain her character: and as her tastes and pursuits were far above even the comprehension, as well as the level, of ordinary minds, Rachel never suspected that her "heart was not right with God." The Elders of the city had, indeed, often told her so in plain terms, made plainer by the shaking of their hoary heads: but, although she was too gentle to repel the charge, she only pitied their prejudices. Sheshbazzar, as she imagined, thought very differently of her; and his smile was set against their insinuations. He perceived this mistake, and proceeded to correct it. He had borne with it long, in hope that it would gradually correct itself. He had made allowances, and exercised patience, and kept silence on the subject,

until his treatment of Rachel began to be reckoned weakness, and not wisdom, by his best friends.—His plan had been to bear aloft his young eagle upon his own mighty wings, until she breathed the air of spirits, and bathed in the light of eternity; and then to throw her off upon the strength of her own pinions, that she might, whilst he hovered near to intercept a sudden fall, soar higher in the empyrean of glory, and come down "changed in the same image," and humbled by the "exceeding weight" of that glory. But the experiment failed: she descended mortified because of her weakness, not humbled because of her unworthiness. He resolved, therefore

"To change his hand, and check her pride."

"Rachel," said Sheshbazzar, "the first day of vintage is near at hand, and there is but little fruit on my vines; could we not send to the Dead Sea for grapes of Gomorrah, and present them before the Lord, 'as a waive-offering, and pour them out as a drink-offering?'"

Rachel was surprised at the question; for it was put solemnly, and betrayed no symptom of irony.

"Grapes of Gomorrah!" Rachel exclaimed; "ask rather, if strange fire, or a torn lamb, may be safely presented at the altar of Jehovah? But Sheshbazzar mocketh his handmaid. The curse is upon all the ground of the cities of the plain; and, moreover, the grapes of Gomorrah are as bitter as they are beautiful. Even the wild goats turn away from the vines of Sodom. What does my father mean?—The form of thy countenance is changed! Like the spies, I will go to Eshcol or Engedi for clusters to present before the Lord; for the Lord our God is a jealous God."

"True, my daughter," said Sheshbazzar; "and if it would be sacrilege to present the grapes of Gomorrah in the waive-offering, because they grow on the land of the curse, and have imbibed its bitterness; how must a jealous and holy God reject the homage of a proud spirit? The fruits of that spirit draw their juices from a soil more deeply cursed than the Asphaltic,—and of which Gomorrah, when in flames, was but a feeble emblem."

"But, Sheshbazzar," said Rachel, "to whom does this apply? Not to your spirit; for it is a veiled seraph, lowliest in itself when loftiest in its adorning contemplations. And my spirit—is too weak to be proud. I feel myself a mere atom amidst infinity. I feel less than nothing, when I realize the Infinite Spirit of the universe."

"It is well, my daughter; but what do you feel when you realize Him as the HOLY ONE who inhabiteth eternity? Rachel! I never heard you exclaim, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* You have called yourself an atom in the universe—an insect in the solar blaze—an imperfect grape on the vine of being; any thing, but a sinner. It was not thus that Abraham, and Job, and Isaiah, felt before the Lord. It is not thus that I feel. You think me like the grapes of Sibmah and Engedi, ripe for the

service of the heavenly temple. Ah, my daughter! nothing but 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' keeps me from despair; and there is nothing else between you and Tophet."

Rachel trembled. She had never marked the humility of the Patriarchs, nor paused to consider what the soul and sin must be—seeing they required such an atonement. She retired weeping; and, for the first time, retreated into her closet to pray for MERCY.

However the first discoveries of the beauty of holiness may be made, and whatever may be the first motives which induce any one to desire to follow holiness, neither its nature nor its necessity are rightly understood, until both the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit are duly considered. Until we look to the blood of the Lamb and the sanctification of the Spirit, as the only way of acquiring that holiness which constitutes meetness for heaven, no moral sentiments, however pure, and no sense of the beauty of virtue, however delicate, amount to "a clean heart" or "a right spirit" towards God. She who carries her inquiries after the principles of true holiness no farther than just around the circle of its duties, and over the surface of its proprieties, ill deserves the high privilege of possessing a Bible, and has no right to call herself a Christian.

It is, indeed, both proper and necessary to sit at the feet of Jesus on the Mount of Olives, learning morality from his precepts; but it is equally essential to sit at his feet in Gethsemane, where he trod the wine-press of the wrath of God; and on Mount Calvary, where he made his soul an offering for sin; learning there, also, the real evil of sin, and the infinite expense at which it is pardoned and taken away.

In saying this, I do not forget nor undervalue the sweet influence which holy example exerts over some gentle and ingenuous spirits. The Shunamite is not the only woman whose attention and good will to piety have been conciliated, in the first instance, by the weight and worth of a ministerial character like Elisha's. Day after day, she saw the prophet moving about in his sphere of public duty, like a commissioned angel, with equal meekness and patience; happy in his work, and transparent in all his character: and this contrast between Elisha and hirelings, led her to cultivate his friendship. "She said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passes by us continually; let us make a little chamber on the wall, I pray thee; and set there for him a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick."

In like manner, the lovely character of exemplary parents and friends, has often suggested the first idea of the beauty of holiness, and excited the first desire to be holy. The simple reflection, "I should so like to resemble them," has not unfrequently led to imitation. But imitation, whenever



it has been attempted on a large scale, has soon compelled to an examination of the secret springs of eminent holiness. The want of success, or the waywardness of some temper, makes the young candidate pause and ask, why she could not equal her models, nor realize her own wishes. She expected to be as much a heroine in practice and perseverance, as she felt herself to be in theory. She took for granted, that she had only to resolve and try, in order to be as good, as amiable, as holy; and happy in religion, as the friends she admired most; but the fond aspirant after high moral excellence, soon found out that it was not so easily attained as she imagined, and that she herself was not so strong in principle as she supposed.

This discovery is always the result of honest endeavors to be very like very lovely Christians. It is, however, a most important discovery. It may stop effort for a time, and even discourage hope not a little; but it leads to such an observation of the principles and motives of those we have failed to copy, as soon explains our failure. The discovery of our own weakness is followed by a discovery of the *secret* of their strength and success. We cease to wonder, (however we may continue to weep,) that we made so little progress, when we resolved to be as good as the best; for we both resolved and tried in our own strength; or with such a vague reference to the grace of God for help, that success was impossible. It could not be otherwise, whilst the cross of Christ was to us only a solemn fact in sacred history, and the work of the Holy Spirit merely a cardinal article of the creed. Not in this tame form did these great truths stand (we saw!) before the minds of those we admired and wished to resemble. We discovered that the Cross and Grace were the only pillars on which their hopes rested; the very poles upon which their habits and spirits turned; the very source and centre of all their religion and morality. This, we saw, made the difference between them and us.

These are invaluable lessons in experience, whether acquired in this way, or by some other process. They are, however, incomplete lessons, whilst they only lead us to perfect our *theology*, by bringing it up to the standard of eminent Christians. It is, indeed, well to take care that both the Cross and Grace have all that prominence in our creed which they hold in their creed. It is wise to mark minutely how they glory in the Cross, and depend on the Spirit, at every step and stage of their piety. It is, however, quite possible to embrace the faith of the saints, because it is *their* faith, without embracing it for their chief reasons. They glory only in the cross of Christ because they are *sinners*. This is their first, and chief reason, for believing as they do.

I pray your attention to this fact. Your pious friends are not, indeed, uninfluenced by other considerations than their own sinfulness, in thus making the Atonement "all and all," as the ground of their hope. They are much influenced by the example of the great cloud of witnesses around the

throne; all of whom washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: by the example of the innumerable company of angels; all of whom also look into the sufferings of Christ with untiring wonder and intense admiration: and especially by the example of the Father, who counts the Cross the glory of his moral government; and of the Holy Ghost, who confines his agency to the exhibition and application of the things of Christ, for the glory of Christ. All these considerations are both load-stars and leading-stars, to bring and bind the confidence of your friends to the Lamb of God. They often help their faith, by remembering how the noble army of martyrs shook the flames and the scaffold with the shout, "None but Christ!" and by listening to the New Song, as it swells for ever louder from all the harps of heaven. Even the historic truth and the moral triumphs of the doctrine of the Cross, have no small influence in confirming the faith of the saints in the sacrifice of Christ. They are glad, too, that the wisdom of philosophy is foolishness, and the inspiration of poetry tameness, compared with the sublimity and glory of the Cross.

Still, whilst all these considerations have much weight with intelligent and devoted Christians, they are most influenced by a deep sense of their own personal guilt and danger. They feel their *need* of such a Saviour as the Lamb of God. They not only see that there is nothing but the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin: they see also that nothing else could cleanse them from *their* sins.

Now, I need hardly say to you, that the Christians you admire most, were not greater sinners, before their conversion, than others. In general, they had quite as fair a character as their neighbors, so far as morals were concerned. They were not, therefore, driven into their deep self-condemnation, nor into their fear of perishing, by having been worse than others. How, then, came they to think, and feel, and act towards the Saviour, just as if they had been the very chief of sinners? You know that they are not pretending, when they adopt humiliating confessions, nor when they look with streaming eyes and bleeding hearts to the Cross.—The real secret is this: they know their own hearts; watch their own consciences; test their own spirits; and thus see and feel their natural alienation from God. What pains, humbles, and alarms them chiefly is, the awful want of love to God, which marked their early history; and the sad weakness of their love to Him, since they believed that "God is Love." Hence, they can hardly conceive how their ingratitude and insensibility can either be forgiven or removed. Even with all the glories and grace of the Cross before them, they find no small difficulty in trying to hope for their own salvation; because neither that salvation itself, nor the amazing sacrifice at which it was provided, has such an influence over them, as they know it ought to have. Thus they find causes of fear or suspicion, even in the very grounds of hope; because those grounds do not affect and interest them more fully. It is, there-

fore, their sins against the Cross, quite as much as the sins which made the sacrifice of the Cross necessary, that makes them feel so self-condemned.—They see enough, and more than enough, to condemn them, in the way they have treated the Atonement made to save them. Thus, there is neither pretence nor parade in their humility. They do—cling to the Cross, not only because they wish to be holy, but also because they are conscious that they deserve the wrath to come. They glory in it, not merely that they may be sanctified, soul, body, and spirit; but also that they may be plucked as brands from the burning. The peril of perishing, as well as the love of holiness, influences both their conduct and spirit.

Now, unless these be your reasons for giving the Cross a higher place in your esteem than it had at first, you cannot have “like precious faith” in it with your pious friends; nor can it have all that holy influence upon you which it has upon them.—You must trust it as a sinner, if you would have it transform you into a saint. You must flee to it as the only refuge of the Lost, as well as the only remedy of the unholy.

You see this, I hope. I am quite sure you will consider it. It may not be altogether pleasant or plain to you at the first; but you have already thought-so much about Christ, and that too for a holy purpose, that you cannot stop now. Your sense of duty, and your desire to be truly pious, are too strong, to allow you to halt half-way between Sinai and Calvary. I will, therefore, suppose at once, that even this night you will retire to your closet, and bow down before God, as a penitent, and not merely as a candidate for immortality, as a sinner, needing deliverance from the wrath to come; and not merely as an imperfect being, needing only improvement. Remember!—there are none in heaven but those who came to the Mercy-seat, in this spirit and for this purpose. This is, also, the very spirit of all those on earth, whose piety you must admire.

Now, I should not at all wonder (however much you may) if, on taking this view of your own case, you find yourself led into self-abhorrence and self-abasement, as well as into self-condemnation. It would not surprise me in the least, to hear you cry, “Behold I am vile: unclean, unclean; God be merciful to me a sinner!” Nay; I should not be much startled, if even you were so alarmed, at first, by the discovery of your own alienation from God, as to be unable for a time, to hope or pray for mercy. Your guilt and vileness, in caring so little about the God of salvation, may open upon you in lights, which shall only reveal “clouds and darkness” around the Mercy-seat at first: or, some one sin, which has only made you ashamed hitherto, may so shock your conscience, that you may feel as if you never could get over it, nor be able to look up to God again with complacency or composure.

This is not an uncommon case. Your pious friends have felt in this way at times. Many feel so, without knowing how to obtain relief, or how

the blood of Atonement meets such a case. Now do you know? Do you see how the blood of Christ can so “purge your conscience from dead works,” that you can henceforth “serve the living God,” without slavish or tormenting fear? Do you see enough in the grace and glory of the Atonement, to lift your spirit over that sense of sinfulness and unworthiness, which creates only a dread of God, or doubts of his willingness to save! If not, you have yet much to learn on this subject. Indeed, you have not yet got hold of that “horn” of the golden altar of the Atonement, which enables a self-condemned penitent to lift herself above slavish fear, when she draws nigh to God in prayer, in sacraments, and in practical duty. Thus, you are not prepared to serve the Living God “without fear in holiness and righteousness, all the days of your life.”

And yet, you desire to do so. You not only feel it to be your duty to serve “the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” but you are trying to serve Him better than formerly, and willing to increase and improve your present scale of service. Like the Israelites at Shechem, in the days of Joshua, you are not only ready to say, “The Lord our God will we serve,” but ready also to enter into an everlasting covenant of obedience. They, you recollect, insisted upon ratifying their promise and intention by a covenant, and even engaged to become witnesses against themselves if they drew back. So far, this was a fine spirit. Joshua must have been highly gratified to hear his dying appeal,—“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,”—thus warmly and honestly responded to. I say, honestly; for there is no reason whatever to doubt the sincerity of the people, when they thus pledged themselves. Nor do I at all doubt your sincerity. You may, however, doubt my kindness or candor, when I venture to say to you, what Joshua said to them, “Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a Holy God.” I mean, you cannot serve him “acceptably,” until you are influenced by other and higher motives than either the love of virtue or the fear of punishment. Even some distinct and deliberate reference to the merits of Christ, and to the grace of the Holy Spirit, as necessary to help or perfect your well-doing, will not mend the matter. Even a determination to say, after having done your best, “We are but unprofitable servants,” will not forward your success much. Ye cannot serve the Lord acceptably, but as an entire debtor to the blood of Christ for mercy and grace; “for He is a Holy God—a Jealous God—the Living God!”

These distinctions are not too nice, nor these cautions unnecessary, nor these solemn views of God uncalled for, in your case. You need them all, and will never do so well as you wish, until you apply them all to yourself. You doubt this, perhaps? It may seem to you, that you could not serve God at all, if you were to take such awful views of his character. You may be ready to say, “Who can stand before this Holy Lord God?” Accordingly, you deem it better, as you really wish to serve him, to take sweet and soothing views of his character; to dwell chiefly upon his love and mercy; to realize



God as a Father, and to rely upon Him as a Friend. And, in one sense, you are right in judging thus. Indeed, it is to this lovely view of the Divine character I want to bring and bind all your thoughts and affections. Nothing is further from my intention, than terrifying you at the God with whom you have to do. I would teach you to lay your head upon his knee—yea, to lean it upon his bosom—as calmly, and as confidingly, and as cheerfully, as ever you hung over a father's neck, or reclined upon a mother's bosom. It is not your pleasing ideas of God I want to interfere with. I am not leading you to question the truth of them; but to question your own right or warrant to take such views of God, whilst your views of the Saviour are so imperfect. Now, they are very imperfect, if you see and seek in His merits nothing more than weights to turn the scale of mercy in your favor; or to make up the defects of your obedience. This is not making Christ “all and all” in salvation. This is not glorying in the Cross only. This is making Christ but *half* a Saviour!

You may not intend this; nor yet be aware, exactly, that such views of the Lamb of God do not warrant confidence in the love, nor hope in the mercy, of God. Such views, however, do not warrant either. They are better than Socinian views which embrace nothing but the example of Christ, and better than legal principles, which look for mercy as the reward of good works, independently of Christ. I readily allow this, and even wish you to attach very great importance to the great difference which thus exists between your creed and Socinianism. You regard the Saviour as God manifest in the flesh, and his death as a real sacrifice for sin. You wonder how any one can pretend to believe the Bible, and yet deny the Divinity and atonement of Christ. You feel, that were you to treat Christ as merely a good man and a great martyr, you would have no scriptural right or warrant to regard God as a Father, or even to hope in His mercy. So, then, there are some views of Christ so low, and so unlike the Bible, that you yourself would not venture to hope, if you held them. At least, you see clearly that they do not go far enough to justify hope in God.

Now, we shall come to the point of my argument with you. I have cheerfully allowed, that both your opinion of Christ, and your dependence upon him, go much farther than Socinianism or Legalism; but the question is,—Do they go far enough to warrant you to take those encouraging views of God which you say, are essential, if you would either love or serve him well? Now, you yourself will allow, that if your dependence upon Christ come as far short of the degree in which Paul and the first Christians depended on Him, as Socinianism comes short of what you believe, then you too are wrong, and reckoning without your host, whilst taking for granted that you are welcome to hope as much as you like in God. Why are you not as much afraid to differ from Paul, as you would be to agree with Priestley? Weigh this question; for there is al-

most as great a difference between your dependence and Paul's, as there is between your opinion and Priestley's. You may not have intended, nor even suspected, this; but it is true. Yes; and the contrast is not between you and Paul only: it is between you and all the dead in Christ. Your song of redemption is not the “New Song” of the Redeemed in heaven! Your heart is not in unison with the harps before the throne, whilst you can speak or think about the blood of the Lamb as a balance for your defects and imperfections. There is no such sentiment in the oracles of God on earth, or in the lips of saints in heaven. There, all the glory of salvation is ascribed to the Lamb slain.

Now, it is this sense of debt to the Atonement, and this degree of dependence upon Christ, that I want you to cultivate as your warrant and welcome to fill your whole soul “with all the fulness” of God's paternal love and tenderness. But neither this sense of debt, nor this exclusive dependence, can ever be felt, whilst you avoid to think of God as the **LIVING** God: and this—you do!

Are you surprised at this charge? Do you suspect that I attach any mystical meaning to the scriptural expression, “the Living God?” I do not. I mean nothing more by it, in regard to *all* the perfections of the Divine character, than you mean in regard to *some* of them. I think them all equally alive and lively; but you do not. You do not, indeed, think the justice of God dead; nor the holiness of God dead; nor the jealousy of God dead. You revolt at the bare idea, and feel it to be vulgar, if not profane, to use the word “dead” in any connection with God. I am glad you feel thus afraid of the word: let your fear extend also to the thing.

Look, then, at all that you mean by the word “living” when you connect it with the Love, the Mercy, or the Grace of God. There, you give it a wide and warm meaning. The ever-enduring life and liveliness of these lovely perfections, you believe and admire. Were they dead—all your hopes would die too. And well they might! A God without love or mercy, would be as useless to us as a dead or dumb idol: for as He would do nothing for us, it would be the same to us as if He could do nothing for us.

I keep as fast hold, you see, as you can, upon all that you admire in the Divine character. I am equally afraid with yourself (indeed, I can as little afford as you) to lose sight of even one ray of His infinite love. Like you, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, that it liveth and abideth for ever, in all the lustre and warmth of its original glory. But then—so does also the holiness, the justice, the integrity of God! These, too, are without variableness or the shadow of turning. But you do not rejoice in them. You are even afraid of them. You do not allow yourself to exclude them from the character of God, nor to treat them as if they were dead: but their life is not much connected with your hopes. You do not care to look often at the Holiness and

Justice of God, as they live and move and have their being in the Gospel.

Now, this is what I meant, when I charged you with avoiding to think of God as the living God. You do not think him as much *alive* to the glory of his justice and holiness, as to the glory of his grace and mercy: and the consequence is,—you do not feel all a sinner's need of the blood of Christ. Holiness and justice had, however, quite as much to do with the Atonement and it with them, as love or mercy had, or they with it: and just because you have to do with both, and both with you. Think of this!

And now, just suppose for a moment, that you had to deal only with the strict justice and the perfect holiness of Jehovah: how, in that case, would you use the blood of Atonement? What stress would you lay upon it, if you knew nothing about any love or mercy but just what it implied? Would you, then, employ it only as a weight to turn the scale in favor of your soul and your services? Do you not see, yea feel, through all your spirit, that you would require to plead the merits of the Atonement, even in order to be *allowed* to serve God? Yes, in order to be permitted to serve Him at all!

We think it a very great thing indeed when we are willing to serve God at all; and thus we are ready to take for granted, that he must be well pleased whenever we really try to serve him. And, in one sense, all this is very true. But, how came any one to be willing to serve God acceptably? How came God to be willing to accept any service from fallen man on earth? This does not take place in hell. Fallen angels are neither made willing, nor allowed to serve God. Why? No atonement opened a new and living way to God for them. Christ took not upon him their sins nor their nature; and therefore they would not be permitted to try the service of God, even if they were inclined, which they are not.

Here, then, is the point at which you should begin to re-study your own need of the Atonement. You want it first to warrant you even to *speak* unto God in prayer, about either your own salvation or His service. For, what right have you or any one, to pray for mercy, or to offer yourself as His servant? Not the shadow of a right, from what you are, nor from what you can do. Had not Christ taken upon him your nature and your doom, as a fallen creature, you durst no more have prayed, or served, than fallen angels dare. You owe all the opportunity you have, and all the inclination you feel, entirely to His sacrifice. But for it, there would have been no more means or aids of grace on earth, than there is in hell.

You really must not allow yourself to be led away from a full sight and sense of your need of Christ, by the circumstances of the world. You see, indeed, something as natural and regular in the means of grace, as if Christianity were the religion of nature; for the Gospel takes little children into the school of Christ, and makes as much use of all that creation or providence affords to illustrate sal-

vation, as of all that heaven and eternity furnish to commend it. This is, indeed, a world almost as full of the goodness and glory of God, as if it were neither a rebel nor a fallen world. The system of religious means and motives, which is around you, is also, as much adapted to the faculties and condition of men, as we could well imagine a system of mental discipline or moral government to be, to angels or a newly made world of human beings; for it touches man at every point of his nature, circumstances, and time. But all this, instead of being allowed to hide from you the real or the full place which Christ holds in the economy of human affairs, should illuminate that place, and make him appear "all and all" in the whole array of temporal, intellectual, social, moral, and providential good, which beams and breathes around you. For it is all here, just because, and only because, He kept or brought it here by his Mediation on our behalf.—But for that, all temporal blessings would have been as much withdrawn from the earth, as they are from hell; and our world would have been as destitute of means or motives to be religious, as is the prison of fallen angels. It is not, therefore, your actual sins only, nor the plagues of your heart alone, that create your absolute and equal need of a Saviour, in common with the worst. You are one of a fallen and guilty race; one of an apostate and impure family; and one of them by your own acts and inclinations, as well as by descent and inheritance. You have, therefore, no personal right to cherish the shadow of a hope, nor to offer a prayer or a service unto God. You owe it entirely to the Atonement, that you are allowed to worship or bow down before Jehovah, either as a suppliant or as a servant. Do not lose sight, therefore, of your own condition, by looking round upon characters inferior to yourself. Many, alas, are far inferior both in their habits and spirit; but still, you are not so much above the worst of either sex, as you are beneath the standard of both the Divine image and law. Besides, what is it to you, whatever others are? You are guilty and unholy in your own way and degree: and for no guilt, defect, vanity, folly, or evil, of heart or character, is there any remedy or remission, but in the blood of the Lamb.

The following allegory will, perhaps illustrate this Essay. In all but her dilemma, I commend Miriam to your imitation. Alas, she did not convert Jared.

Jared and Miriam sat together by "the waters of Shiloah that go softly." The setting sun flushed the calm rivulet as it flowed on towards the reservoir of the temple.

"There, Jared," said Miriam, "is an emblem of my church. The Jordan discharges itself into the DEAD SEA; but the waters of Shiloah terminate in the Temple of God. Oh! that *we*, like the fountains of this sacred stream, mingling their waters, could unite in sentiment, and thus flow calmly on to the heavenly temple of God and the Lamb. But as I cannot return to JUDAISM, and you will not quit it—we can never be 'one spirit.'"



"Miriam, my own Miriam! you *must* return to the God of our fathers. Know you not that the 'ANATHEMA MARANATHA' of the Sanhedrim will be pronounced on you, from the chair of Moses, at the next new moon? Surely you will not, by obstinacy, incur the *great* excommunication of the sanctuary. Why should you imagine yourself wiser than the ELDERS of Judah? Let me lead you back to the 'horns of the altar,' to ratify your vows to God and to me."

"Jared!" said Miriam, solemnly and firmly "the great excommunication of the Sanhedrim will sound to me as did the threatenings of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, to Hezekiah;—as 'raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.' I shall pity the BOARGERESSES, and despise their thunders. And as to my vows unto you, they are inviolate; although their fulfilment is delayed by circumstances, I have no wish to retract my betrothment; and if I had, I know not that Christianity would *sanc-*  
*tion* the breach."

"The blessing of the God of Jacob be on you for this assurance, Miriam! but I cannot think well of your hardihood; it is not the heroism it *seems* to be."

"No, Jared; nor is it the *fool*-hardiness which you would insinuate! But, forgive me; I will not take offence. You mistake my new motives, and thus misunderstood my new character. I, however, cling to the cross of Christ, as if *nailed* to it, because I see nothing else between me and hell. My guilty and unholy soul can only be pardoned or purified by the blood of the Lamb of God; and, therefore, by that fountain I must—I *will* abide, even if, like Abel, my own blood should crimson the ACELDAMA."

"Miriam! you amaze and confound me. This is absolute raving. A priestess of APOLLO could not be more extravagant when rushing from the Tripod. YOUR *guilty and unholy soul*, MIRIAM!—How can you thus asperse your own pure nature and character? Your soul is pure as the snow upon the loftiest summits of Lebanon;—at least, its only taint is *heresy*; and that stain will soon be effaced by 'the waters of purification,' in the temple. Only quit the CHRISTIANS, and I shall soon rejoice over you, as in the days of old; singing this song to the harp of Judah, 'Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.—SELAH!' You, Miriam, *unholy*! It is as if the dew of the morning were to charge itself with impurity."

"Jared, and could the dew, even on Hermon, speak, it would acknowledge that it was formed from *earthly* exhalations, and derived its purity from the heavens. And as to your song of triumph, you will never be warranted, if I quit the cross to sing it over me; 'the wings of a dove' are not given to the soul that it may 'flee away' from CALVARY. No; and were my wings like those of the seraphim, 'full of eyes,' their starry radiance would soon be extinguished, like the glories of LUCIFER, were I to cease from following the LAMB. But, Jared, you

think lightly of sin; you do not see its evil, nor feel its malignity. You regard nothing as *sin*, but IMMORALITY; and nothing as *corruption*, but VICE; and, because my character is as UNIMPEACHABLE as you suppose, you suspect me of feigned humility and extravagant penitence. These be far from me! I would that I were more humble and contrite; but always rationally—scripturally so."

"Well, Miriam, what *do you* mean by sin? You surely do not imagine that your buoyant spirits and natural sprightliness are criminal. And as you have always honored your parents, and kept the law from your youth upward, what have you to *repent* of? Your *only* sin has been against me; and you persist in it by delaying our marriage. I wish you would repent of *this* sin; and as John the Baptist said, 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'"

"Jared, be serious; my repentance towards God has no small or slight connection with you. Until of late, I loved you *more* than God. This melancholy fact weighs heavily on my conscience."

"Until of late! And of late, then, Miriam, you have *conquered* the habit of loving me. Is this what I am to understand?"

"No! Jared; nor have you the shadow of a reason to *suspect* it. I, indeed, love God *more* than formerly, but I do not love you *less* than usual. I feel more solicitude—tender, intense solicitude, in your behalf, than ever. And, surely, you would not have me to love you *more* than God!"

"Certainly not: that be far from me, Miriam!"

"And yet, Jared, you, alas! love me far more than you love God; and is not that sinful and symptomatic of an unholy heart? You could not, indeed, love God *more* by loving me *less*; but supreme love to Him would regulate your love to me without at all lessening its cordiality. Oh, consider how we have alienated our hearts from God hitherto! We lived as if Jehovah had no claims upon our affection, or only such claims as the *ceremonial* law could satisfy. I appeal to your own conscience!—How often, even while engaged in the duties of religion, 'God was not in all our thoughts!' We went to the Temple and the Synagogue to meet each other on the SABBATH, and while our lips joined in the songs of Zion our *thoughts* centered in ourselves. We regularly witnessed the sacrifices on the GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT; but our minds were wholly taken up with the sublime music of the silver trumpets, and the simple majesty of the Levitical processions around the golden altars. We partook of the PASSOVER for the mere pleasure of eating together. Often have we sat under this palm-tree while the priests were drawing water from the fountains of Shiloah, and 'pouring it out before the Lord; but we marked only their picturesque beauty, and felt only the transport of enjoying the scene together. And at the hours of the morning and evening sacrifice, while we repeated the PRAYERS, we did not 'pray in the spirit,' JARED! we lived for each other—not for the glory of God. This is the *guilt* which lies heavily on my conscience; these

are some of the melancholy facts which convince me that my soul is naturally unholy; and so is your soul."

"Well, Miriam, suppose I grant all this: see ye not what the concession involves? Nothing less than the duty of your *return* to Judaism; for if you are guilty by not honoring the sacrifices sufficiently, how great must your guilt become by neglecting and renouncing them entirely! You are caught—you are completely entangled in your own net, Miriam!"

"Ah, Jared, I had hoped, from the seriousness with which you listened to my confessions, that you were joining in them for *yourself*. I am disappointed; but, notwithstanding, I will answer you. I am not at all involved in deeper guilt by neglecting the sacrifices. They never were real, but a *typical* atonement for sin; and, now that the LAMB of God is slain for the sin of the world, to honor *them* would be to dishonor Him. On my own principles, therefore, a return from the glorious SUBSTANCE to the shadows of it, would render my guilt unpardonable. Besides, were it *safe* to return, what a loss of enjoyment I should sustain! The transition from the cross to your altars again, would be to me as Mount Moriah would be to Abraham, now that he has spent ages in Paradise; as the *cloud* on Sinai would be to MOSES, now that he has communed with Jehovah 'in light full of glory;' as the *wilderness* to the whole church of the first-born in heaven, now that they are without spot before the throne of God and of the Lamb. I do not affect what I do not feel; those spirits of just men made perfect would lose only a *part* of their bliss by exchanging worlds; but were I to exchange the cross for the altar, all my happiness would change into 'a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.' For, if 'he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing?"

"Your reasonings would be powerful, Miriam, and your solemn conclusions just, were your premises true. But a truce to this theological warfare—it would suit a Sanhedrim of RABBINS better than it does a young man and a maiden of Israel, under the shade of a palm-tree, on the banks of Shiloah. It was not *exactly* thus that JACOB and RACHEL reasoned amongst 'the green pastures,' and by 'the still waters' of Pandanaram."

"But it is thus they reason *now*, Jared, where 'the LAMB himself leads them to living fountains of water' in heaven; and all the armies of heaven unite with them in admiring and adoring the Lamb of God. Besides, RACHEL had no occasion to reason with Jacob; his heart was right with God, and his soul safe for eternity."

"Which mine are not! you would say, Miriam."

"Which, MINE were not, Jared, until I was reconciled to God, by the Cross of Christ. Until the love of Christ won my heart, I was utterly unfit for heaven; for I had hardly one sentiment or feeling

in harmony with the enjoyments or the engagements of Paradise. As a matter of *taste*, I had, certainly, revelled in the visions of IMMORTALITY, when it was illuminated by the Gospel, before I believed that Gospel. I could not resist the poetical attractions of the Christian heaven. Its thrones of light, crowns of glory, harps of gold, palms of victory, and its *many* mansions of bliss, fixed my imagination, and elevated my soul. I wished such an inheritance of glory. I felt that a *different* heaven would not satisfy me. I saw, too, that it was 'Abraham's bosom' *opened*; the heaven of the FATHERS unveiled. This heightened its fascinations; but, at that moment, I discovered that I was utterly *unfit* for it. I desired a crown of glory, but felt that I could not place it at the foot of the LAMB;—a harp of gold, but not to sing the 'NEW SONG';—a palm of victory, but not to wave it in the train of Christ! My proud heart revolted at the bare idea of such subjection to HIM.—I said, in my haste, Were all this honor *confined* to Jehovah, the Christian heaven would be my choice; but to *divide* the honor, by worshipping the Lamb! I spurned the thought. And yet, JARED, I did not feel at *ease* in doing so. I had *misgivings* of heart, as well as prejudices; and, in order to calm my fears, I was compelled to express unto Jehovah, my supreme regard to his glory, and my sincere veneration of his authority. These, I said, were my *sole* reasons for rejecting the Gospel. Then I began to strengthen these reasons, by studying the DIVINE CHARACTER; for still the Christian heaven kept its hold upon my heart. I could not forget its scenes and society. I felt as if I was *not* right. I therefore *plunged*, as it were, into the contemplation of the Divine character. THEN, I saw, I felt, that I could not 'stand before God.' It flashed upon me with all the keenness of sensation, that I could not bear to see GOD AS HE IS! His holiness and justice appeared to me like the *dark* side of the Shechinal pillar to the Egyptians, overwhelming! And yet, it was 'the *beauty* of his holiness,' it was the *glory* of his justice, that overwhelmed me. I saw not, I felt not, at the time, their *terrors*. One deep, calm, solemn, awful conviction penetrated and pervaded my whole soul; it was, that I *could not bear an ETERNITY in the presence of JEHOVAH!* I had never thought of this before, but taken for granted, that, if I only were admitted to heaven, all would be right. But when I considered that I had no *delight* in the character of God, and that he could not love nor approve this state of mind, I saw, at a glance, that while my heart was thus dead to his excellence, I could have no communion with Him, nor with the spirits who were alive to it. THEN—then, Jared, came the inquiry—How can I be *reconciled* unto God? How can I become *such* a character, that He can look upon me, and I upon Him, with complacency, for ever and ever?"

"Go on, Miriam, this view of the matter is almost new to me."

"To me, Jared, it was *altogether* new. Until the immortality brought to light by the Gospel, drew my soul within the veil, and confronted me, in thought,



with Jehovah, I had no idea that I was *unfit* for an eternity of his presence in heaven; for I had never before paused to consider, that, when he shall be seen 'AS HE IS,' then the light which reveals him, will reveal the *evil of sin*, in all its enormity—and 'the beauties of holiness,' in all their glory. But, to see sin thus, and feel its principles within me! to see holiness thus, and not feel all its principles within me! would render the Divine presence intolerable. Heaven could not make me happy under such circumstances.

"Well might the Prophet exclaim, 'Who can stand before this Holy Lord God!' Jared! I could not stand before *you*, without confusion of face and heart too, were I conscious of not loving you as I ought. How overwhelming then would an eternity of the Divine presence be, without the consciousness of entire and intense love to God! I felt this—and felt, too, that I neither had, nor could produce such love to him. The necessity of it was self-evident, but the acquisition of it seemed impossible. Thus my own conscience shut me out of heaven. But, by this process, God was 'shutting me up unto the faith.' Accordingly, the moment I saw that, by believing his testimony concerning Christ, I should be justified and adopted, and thus placed under the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, I found it impossible not to love God. My way was then clear; and now I see clearly how the perfection of the atonement will give eternal peace to the conscience, and secure such purity of soul, that the open vision of God will neither overpower nor embarrass the followers of the Lamb."

"Miriam, Paul should have made an exception in your favor, and suffered you to speak in the Church. I will certainly suffer you to speak at home, if you are always thus eloquent. I love eloquence; and, although I dislike your Gospel, as you call it, I will not contradict you. You shall have your own way in religion. Can you wish for more from 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews?' Miriam wept!

### NO. III.

#### EMBLEMS OF HOLINESS.

It was, indeed, a Poet who compared "the beauties of Holiness," to "*the dew of the morning*;" but the comparison is not a poetical license. It is poetry of the highest order; but it is also sober fact. The Harp of Juda breathed it in music; but an *inspired* hand swept the strings. David was a Prophet as well as a poet; and, therefore, we are both warrant and bound to say, when he predicts the number or the beauty of the Church, under the emblem of morning dew,—"*The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" Thus it was the Eternal Spirit who suggested and sanctioned the comparison; and as he is both the author and finisher of all true Holiness, we may be quite sure that dew is neither a false nor a fanciful emblem of its beauty. Besides, splendid as Old Testament

emblems of Holiness are, they are not so splendid as those which occur in the New Testament. The Apostles go far beyond the Prophets, in emblazoning Holiness. They assert its *sublimity*, as well as its beauty. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, *from glory to glory*, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Thus Paul represents growth in grace as growth in glory; or progressive sanctification on earth as akin to progressive glory in heaven. Neither the evening stars of the Angelic hierarchy, pressing upon the spheres of its morning stars; nor the General Assembly of Time, rising to the stature and strength of the elder spirits of Eternity; nor, indeed, any ascent in the scale of heavenly perfection, could so dazzle him, or so eclipse the beauty of earthly holiness, as to make him ashamed to call its progress, a change "*from glory to glory.*" He goes even farther and higher than this; and declares that Believers are made "*partakers of a Divine nature,*" by the influence of the great and precious promises. Thus it is, as the Saviour said—"*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" Both Prophets and Apostles understood this sublime fact, and therefore admired and celebrated the beauty of holiness. Paul, especially saw and pointed out the "*loveliness*" of whatsoever things are pure. Peter also does not hesitate to call female holiness an "*ornament*, which is, in the sight of God, of great price."

It is, therefore, neither wise nor humble to overlook "the beauties of holiness." God himself admires them, and calls them "*the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*" And the Saviour (who never datters, sentimentalizes, nor compliments) pronounces, not only a special benediction upon "*the pure in heart,*" but says also in unqualified terms, "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*" Thus the fruits of the Spirit are praised for their beauty, as well as enforced for their necessity.

I am fully aware, however, that by bringing together these Scriptural views of personal holiness, I may startle, if not discourage for a moment, some who sincerely desire to be holy. It may seem, in this lovely and lofty form, an impossible thing in our own case. We may even be ready to exclaim, on casting a hurried glance around the circle of our pious friends,—Whose holiness is thus beautiful? Where is the sanctification to be seen which resembles the dew of the morning; or the grace, that is glory in the bud? This is, however, a hasty question. We have applied both these pure emblems to some of our friends, who were ripe for heaven, when they were removed from the earth.—Our memory lingers upon the beauty, as well as upon the strength, of certain features of their character and spirit. We said when they died, and have often whispered to ourselves since, O that I were as "*meet for the inheritance of the saints in light!*" Yea, in regard to some of the living in Jerusalem, we feel that their character is truly lovely. It is not spotless; but it is very transparent in

integrity and benevolence. It is not "already perfect;" but like light, it is shining more and more unto the perfect day. Some of our pious friends have such worth of character, that their censure or approbation weighs with us, like the decisions of a second conscience, in our breast; we have such entire confidence in their candor and prudence; in their discernment and uprightness. Thus there are both Fathers and Mothers in Israel, whose holiness we feel to be very beautiful. Even the world cannot withhold homage from it; it is so consistent.—And in the fold of the Church, there are both sheep and lambs, which so hear the voice and follow the steps of the Good Shepherd, that we can easily believe in their case, how He who laid down his life for them, should lead them gently, and even "carry them in his bosom," when the way is rugged, or their strength exhausted.

Thus, there is some holiness on earth worthy of *admiration*, as well as of imitation. The image of God upon the soul, although not general, and never perfect in this world, is yet to be seen here and there, like "a lily amongst thorns," lovely in itself and illustrious by contrast. Neither the Abrahams nor the Sarahs, the Zechariahs nor the Elizabeths, the Rachels nor the Marys of antiquity, are without parallels in our own times, or without successors in our spheres.

"But none of them," it may be said, "admire their own character, or see any beauty in their own holiness. We admire them: but even the best of them abhor themselves, and can neither bear to speak nor think of their own excellence: How is this?" It is easily accounted for. Eminent holiness is always accompanied with profound humility. Accordingly, even in Heaven, the Seraphim veil their faces with their wings, and the crowned martyr *uncrowns* himself before the throne: no wonder, therefore, if the saints on earth hide their faces in the dust of self-abasement, when they think or speak about themselves. The beauty of angelic holiness—the beauty of JEHOVAH's glorious holiness, is before their eyes vividly and constantly; and in its presence, they may well say, "Behold, I am vile, and abhor myself:" for as the natural eye feels nothing but its own weakness when it gazes upon the meridian sun, so the eye of the mind can see nothing but deformity and imperfection in the heart and character, when it gazes upon the infinite and immaculate purity of the Godhead. No saint, who comprehends at all the heights or depths, the lengths or breadths, of the Divine image, can ever be satisfied with his own holiness, or cease to be ashamed of it, until he awake in heaven in all the beauty of the moral image of God. "As for me," said David, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." Thus he who recognised in earthly holiness the beauty of the morning dew, was not satisfied with its purity or splendor. He saw in it also, as in dew, an evanescence, and a weakness, and a sediment, which filled himself with shame, and kept him from complimenting others. Still, whilst this is, and ever ought to be, the humbling effect of clear

and solemn views of Divine Holiness, it is of *himself*, not of his holy principles themselves that a Christian is thus ashamed. He does not think lightly of the work of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and conscience, because he thinks meanly of himself.—He does not confound the Spirit with the flesh, nor the law of his mind with the law in his members, when judging of his own character. He sees, indeed, far more evil than good in himself; but he no more calls the good evil, than he calls the evil good. He is more pained by the plagues of his heart, than pleased with its best feelings or principles: but still, he is very thankful for whatever grace he has obtained.

In making these distinctions I do not forget, that there are times, (and these not few nor far between, in the case of some holy men and women,) when a real Christian is so absorbed and shocked by the plagues of his heart, that he is ready to *unchristianize* himself entirely. In the hurry and agitation of these awful moments, he does confound the Spirit with the flesh: and instead of saying like Paul, "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," he says, "in me, soul, body, or spirit, dwelleth no good thing." He forgets the law of his mind, whilst the law of sin and death is thus in fearful power.

These *volcanic* bursts of the old nature are not, however, so lasting as they are overwhelming.—Even whilst they do last, they are so deplored, and hated, and loathed by the Christian himself, that it is quite obvious to others, however he may overlook the facts, that neither his will nor his taste is a *consenting* party to the rebellion within. The horror it creates, proves that he loves holiness. The old man does not rebel in this way, where there is no attempt nor desire to "put on the new man, which is created after the image of God." Both "righteousness and true holiness," have struck their roots deep into the heart, which thus bleeds and is ready to break, when nature overpowers grace. Indeed, it is "the root of the matter," making *room* for striking itself deeper and spreading itself wider, that causes this convulsion and struggling among the roots and branches of indwelling sin. Accordingly, Paul said, "*when I would do good*, evil is present with me." And again, "*when the commandment came*, sin revived." Thus it is only in the heart which tries to delight in the law of God, that this strong rebellion is much felt or noticed. There, however, it creates positive wretchedness whilst it lasts; and when it subsides, who can tell the joy of a Christian? It is joy unspeakable, when his gracious principles begin to lift up their heads again after the conflict: and it is "full of glory," when he finds himself looking again with some faith and hope to Christ and Holiness. Then, like Paul, he adds, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ:" this sweet song follows the bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Thus a Christian not only rallies after apparent defeat, but also learns the worth of his holy principles, which kept sin hateful when it was most



headstrong, and holiness beautiful whilst most opposed. In ordinary circumstances, however, much caution is requisite, in rightly dividing our attention between the *necessity* and the beauty of holiness. Far better follow it, simply because without it no one shall "see the Lord," than follow it ostentatiously, to be "seen of men." The Pharisees forgot this, and became equally legal and lofty. As soon as they thought themselves righteous, they despised others. "Stand aside," soon grew out of the boast, "I am holier than thou." This melancholy fact should teach us to be even *jealous* of our own hearts. They are capable of being "puffed up," by moral, as well as by intellectual superiority. Self-complacency can plume itself upon graces, as well as upon gifts.

We must not, however, learn more from the warning example of the Pharisees than it was intended to teach. Now, it never was held up to convey or suggest the idea, that true holiness could betray us into pride or self-righteousness. No; the farther we follow real holiness, the farther we shall be from vanity and legality, and the lower we shall lie at the foot of the cross, and at the footstool of the mercy-seat. The holiest of the holy men and women of old, were always the humblest of their generation: and for this obvious reason;—they made the law of God the standard, and the image of God the model, of their holiness: and with these infinite mirrors for ever before them, they could neither admire themselves, nor divide their confidence between faith and works.

It was *ceremonial* holiness that betrayed the Pharisees. They made righteousness to consist in repeating a certain number of prayers; in paying the regular tithes, and in observing the stated feasts and festivals of the temple. In these things they were more precise or more ostentatious than others; and thus they came to despise others, and to flatter themselves. Not a man of them, however, would or could have done so, if he had studied holiness in the moral law, or in the revealed image of God. Either of these, if honestly contemplated, would have been a "schoolmaster" to bring them to Christ. For, who can look at the perfection required by the law, or at the purity implied in conformity to the Divine image, and not see that a justifying Saviour and a sanctifying Spirit are equally necessary in order to her salvation? The soul that is intent upon true holiness, must depend on Christ and Grace entirely, or despair entirely: for all the natural reasons of duty are moral reasons for despair. *Mediatorial* reasons only can give either heart or hope to the soul, in the face of a law that requires absolute perfection, and of a heaven which admits nothing that defileth.

Now, we come to the point for close *self-examination*. We have seen that there are two extremes, to which we are equally prone, by turns; sloth and self-complacency. By which of these are we most frequently betrayed? If by sloth—we have most need to study the *necessity* of holiness. The conviction, that without holiness we cannot see the

Lord, is very weak, if we can relax in duty, or leave the state of our hearts to accident. Whenever we reckon it a trouble to take pains with our habits and spirit before God, we are upon the highway to backsliding. Both the heart and the conscience are perverted in no small degree, when watchfulness or effort ceases; and when either ceases, under any excuse or pretence drawn from the *grace* of God, it is high time to take alarm at ourselves: for even our understanding if far perverted, if we can pervert Grace into an apology for idleness and inconsistency. O yes; a *blight* has fallen upon the eyes of our understanding, as well as upon the tenderness of our conscience, if we can tamper with express law because free Grace abounds. For, what convert did not see, at first, more in grace, than even in law, to bind him to circumspect holiness? We certainly saw nothing in the Cross or the Covenant, to release us from high moral obligation or habitual watchfulness, when we first looked to them for mercy to pardon and grace to help. We intended and desired no compromise then, between God and the world. If, therefore, we now imagine that we see in the Cross or the Covenant any thing to warrant or wink at what our own conscience condemns, our "*eye is evil*;" for their is neither sanction nor shield in them to protect any wrong habit or temper. They reign and remain to crucify us to the world, and the world to us: and therefore our glorying in them is not good, so far as it admits a compromise between sin and duty.

But neither strong nor startling assertions, however solemn and severe, will remedy this evil effectually. Warnings, even declamations, do not reach the root of it. Many who can say as loudly as Paul, that his "damnation is just, who sins *because* grace abounds," do not like Paul make the abounding of grace a universal and daily reason for abounding in holiness. They do not venture, indeed, to sin or compromise upon a *large* scale, because grace abounds; but they do some things, and leave other things undone, which they would not, and durst not, if grace did not abound. I mean, that were certain habits and tempers *beyond* the high-flood mark of the spring tides of mercy, and *known* to be unpardonable, there would be a speedy rush of many from the dry places they now occupy, to the spot washed by the waves of pardon. It is, therefore, by regarding some wrong things as not unsafe nor unpardonable, that many persist in them. They would give them up at once and entirely, if they deemed them fatal, or utterly irreconcilable with a state of grace. Now this, although not exactly sinning *because* grace abounds, is very like it. For if a man do what he would not dare, if he counted it unpardonable, it is very evident that the abounding of grace, in some way, is his secret reason, although not his assigned one. He does not, indeed, say, "Let us sin" to *any extent*, "because grace abounds;" but he evidently thinks, or tries to think, that he is not actually and altogether perilling or disproving his own hopes by his own indulgences. In a word, he has some way of making out to himself, that his *own* faults are not incompatible with being really in a state of grace;

and, therefore, although he does not exactly justify them, he does not correct them, nor is he much afraid of them. "Grace," he says, "has to bear with something wrong, even in the best: and as my besetting sin is not of the very worst kind; and as there are some sins I would not commit, and some duties I would not neglect, for worlds, nor on any account whatever, I am not surely presuming very much, when I reckon myself in a state of grace, notwithstanding all my faults." Thus, it is rather some perverted notion about the securities of a *state* of grace, than direct and determinate presumption upon the abounding of grace, that betrays many into a lax holiness, or into allowed inconsistencies of character and temper. I do not, therefore, confound such persons with those who "turn the grace of God into licentiousness;" but I do remind you and myself, and that with warning and weeping solemnity, that this was the first step of the antinomian process by which the primitive compromisers became licentious apostates and judicial reprobates. They begun their unholy career by trying to bend grace into a shelter for some one favorite sin; and, having persuaded themselves that one was not fatal, they went on from bad to worse, until they drowned themselves in perdition. At first they threw the cloak of Christian liberty over a few faults; by and by, over many; and, at last, they made it "a cloak for licentiousness" itself.

Now this, we not only do not want to do, but we abhor it as much as we dread it. It would be any thing but gratifying to us, if grace could be thus perverted with safety. What we are inclined or tempted to wish for, is, such a forbearance or winking at what is wrong about us, as shall allow our faults to go on, without exactly throwing us out of a state of grace, before we find it convenient and agreeable to give them up: for we intend to crucify, eventually, the very things we now try to excuse. We even promise to ourselves and to God, that they shall not go on to the end of life, nor so near to it as to darken or embitter our death-bed. What a shame, then, to yield now to any thing we are thus pledged to conquer hereafter! Why, if our *general* character is rather consistent than inconsistent, should we allow, even for another day, any fault or flaw, which pains can cure, and prayer efface to remain? It would cost us far less trouble to correct at once the worst fault we have, than it costs to get over the misgivings of heart and the twinges of conscience, which that fault occasions in the closet and at the sacrament. Besides, we have already made greater sacrifices to conscience and duty, than any we have to make. All our great sins are given up for ever, willingly too: and shall the *little* ones hold us in bondage?

Do we feel, in the presence of these exposures and remonstrances, any inclination to say—"Why this is making grace as strict as Law could be: what then is the advantage of being under grace, instead of law, if so much circumspection and impartiality be requisite?"

Here is the advantage: "sin then shall not have

the dominion over" us, if we be under grace: and if we reckon this no advantage, we do not understand the Law well, nor Grace aright.

Are we half-inclined to try the question in another form, and to say, "Still, as something wrong will remain, do whatever we may, why not let that fault remain, which we find most difficult to conquer? Might there not come a worse in its place?"

I will not call this pleading *for* sin. It may be merely put forward as clever casuistry, to evade close reasoning, which we have no wish to set aside. Indeed, no Christian would dare to vindicate a sin, great or small, by name. He must regard even his chief fault as an infirmity, or a weakness, or an imperfection, before he can plead or apologize for it. As sin—he has not a word to say on its behalf. You at least, have not one.

Let, therefore, the emblems of holiness which the Holy Ghost teaches by, suggest to you all that he intends. That, of course, will seem more than you can acquire; but it will enable you to do better than those do who compare themselves only with others. Scriptural figures are not fancies. "It seems to the honor of religion, that so many things can, without the art of forcing resemblances, be accommodated to its illustration. It is an evident and remarkable fact, that there is a certain principle of *correspondence* to religion throughout the economy of the world. He that made all things for himself, appears to have willed that they should be a great system of EMBLEMS, reflecting or shadowing forth that system of principles in which we are to apprehend Him and our relations and obligations to Him: so that religion, standing up in grand parallel to an infinity of things, receives their testimony and homage, and speaks with a voice which is echoed by creation."—FOSTER. The justness of these profound and splendid remarks is almost self-evident in the emblem of Dew. The history of dew is a figurative history of CONVERSION; and, in its leading features, so strikingly similar, that if dew had been created for no other purpose but to image forth the "new creation," it could hardly be more characteristic.

The design of God in establishing and pointing out the resemblances between natural and spiritual things is obvious. He thus places us so, that, whether we are in the house or the fields, we may have before us "lively oracles" of his great salvation: at home, in the Bible; abroad, in nature. For, as prophet unto prophet, and apostle unto apostle, so "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge,"—there being no voice of nature which does not echo some voice of Revelation.

Thus the ORIGIN of dew is an emblem of human society in its *natural* state. The original elements of dew are as various in their character, as the diversified states in which water and moisture exist on the earth. Now they exist in swamps and seas, in marshes and meadows, in stagnant pools and running streams, in fetid plants and fragrant flowers:



but wherever water lies or lurks, whether in the chalice of a rose or in the recess of a tank, it must undergo the same change, and pass from fluid to *vapor*, before it becomes dew. As *water*, it cannot, however pure or polluted, ascend into the atmosphere, nor refine itself into dew: it may undergo changes of taste, color, and smell, according to the channels it lies in and flows on; but into dew it will not turn, until it is exhaled in vapor by the sun.

Now, the moral, like the natural world, has its putrid marshes and its pure streams—its calm lakes and its stormy oceans; for although no class of mankind is naturally holy, some classes are comparatively pure, and others grossly vile. There are, in society, the decent and the indelicate, the humane and the cruel, the cool and the passionate, the upright and the dishonest. These distinctions between man and man are as visible as those of land and water on the globe, and as real as the difference between spring and pit water. But no natural amiableness of disposition, nor any acquired refinement of character, amounts to “true holiness.” The best, in common with the worst, “must be born again” before they can enter into the kingdom of God: for, as water, in its purest state, must be exhaled into vapor before it can be transmuted into dew, so both the moral and the immoral must be regenerated before they can enter heaven. Education may purify the manners, but only faith can purify the heart: love of character may secure external decorum, but only the love of Christ can secure internal holiness. Thus far the resemblance holds good.

Again; the agency by which dew is produced from all the varieties of water, is an emblem of that spiritual agency by which the varieties of human character are transformed into the Divine image. Now, the sun is the grand agent in the natural world, by which portions of all waters are changed into vapor. His heat, operating on their surface, produces exhalations wherever it touches, drawing vapor from the wide expanse of the ocean and from the weedy pool; from the brackish river and from the sweet brook. And the sun is the only luminary of heaven that exhales the waters. The moon regulates their tides, and the stars irradiate their surface; but the united rays of both are insufficient to evaporate ingredients for a single dewdrop. It is the sun which draws from the earth, into the atmosphere, the elements of this beautiful fluid: in like manner, it is “the Sun of Righteousness” alone that draws sinners from the fearful pit of the curse, and from the miry clay of corruption. The attractive influence of his cross is to us what the heat of the sun is to the moisture of the earth—the only drawing power. Other doctrines may, like the moon, produce regular tides of formal worship, and, like the stars, brighten the surface of the character; but they shine too cold to regenerate the heart or purify the conscience. Thus, *ARIANISM*, although it shone in the brightness of learning and ethics during the last century, had no spiritual attraction: it drew small numbers from the Church to

the Meeting; but none from the world to God—as the God of salvation. *SOCINIANISM* also has, of late, shone in the heat of proselyting zeal; but the only effect is, that some of the young, who formerly cared nothing about religion, are become flippant speculators, and many of the speculators masked Deists. It is notorious that the system has made the young “heady and high-minded,” and the old callous. Many of both are, indeed, intelligent and upright; but these were so *before* they embraced the system, and would be what they are under any moral system, while their local and relative circumstances continue the same. And what have the classically elegant lectures on morals, which sound from so many pulpits, done for the young or old? Except maintaining a routine of formal worship, and raising an ignorant clamor against evangelical truth, they have left parishes and districts as they found them—locked up in the icebergs of apathy and self-delusion. And such must ever be the effects of *legal* preaching, because it is not God’s appointment for winning souls. He no more intends to save sinners by the law, than to evaporate the waters by the moon or the stars. The law, like these luminaries, is a light to our feet in “the new and living way;” but only the Sun of Righteousness, shining in the Gospel, can draw us into that way. “The dew of his youth” can only be formed by his own influence. Thus far, also, the parallel is just.

Again; the secret process by which the exhaled vapors are turned into dew, is an emblem of that Divine operation by which the Holy Spirit makes sinners “new creatures in Christ Jesus.” The precise agent in nature, by which vapor is condensed into dew, is not known: whether it is by cold or by electricity, or by both, is still as much a mystery as when God asked Job from the whirlwind, “Who hath begotten the drops of the dew?” In like manner, although we know that the Holy Spirit is the agent who changes the heart, by making the Gospel power unto salvation, we are ignorant of the nature of his operations. Whether they are partly physical, or wholly moral, is unknown. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” But we do know what is much *better*—that his sacred influences are inseparably connected with the conscientious use of the means of grace, and forthcoming in answer to serious prayer. This we know; that as water *exposed* to the sun will be evaporated in part, and water *excluded* from the sun will never become dew; so we may expect Divine influence in the use of divinely appointed means, and can look for none if they are neglected.

Again; the *similarity* of dewdrops in pureness and beauty, although formed from all the varieties of vapor, is a fine emblem of that uniform spirit which characterizes the diversified classes of mankind, who are brought to believe on Christ for salvation. There is what may be called a *family likeness* prevailing throughout the dewdrops of the morn-

ing. They differ in size; but they are all transparent, tender, and pure. This is the more remarkable, seeing their original elements were so different: part of the vapor was drawn from the briny deep, and part from the putrid fens; portions of it from the slimy pool, and portions from the steaming surfs. Now, that the exhalations from springs and rivulets, from the herbs of the field and the flowers of the garden, should return to the earth in sweet dews is not surprising; but that the gross and tainted vapors should return sweet and pure, is wonderful! And yet all this is realized under the gospel. The sinner drawn from the very dregs of society, and the sinner drawn from a respectable family—the convert from sensuality, and the convert from intellectual pride—the wanderer returning from vice, and the wanderer renouncing vanity—become alike in their leading views, principles, and feelings; they build their hopes on the same foundation, ascribe their escape to the same grace, and aim at the same kind and degree of holiness. “Who-soever” hath the hope of eternal life “in Christ,” “purifieth himself,” even as Christ is pure. Converts differ, indeed, in the degree of their knowledge, gifts, and graces—as the dewdrops in their size; but, like them, they are all partakers of a new nature, and each compared with what he was before conversion, “a new creature in Christ Jesus.”

Again: the refreshing and fertilizing influence of the dew is a fine emblem of the salutary influence of converts in their respective families and spheres. The dew cools the sultry air, revives the parched herbage of the earth, and bathes the whole landscape in renovated beauty; and, in like manner, holy families are harmonious—holy churches tranquil. Even an individual convert is not without a portion of sweet influence in his circle: the change in his character and spirit suggests to others the necessity and the possibility of being changed too; and thus “they that dwell under his shadow revive as the corn and grow as the vine.” His example distils as dew upon the tender herb, quickening the formal to the power of godliness, and awakening the careless to consideration. Thus the pious are the *salt* of the earth. The absence of dew would not be more fatal to the natural world, than the want of converts to the moral world. Were they withdrawn, or were their succession to cease, even the general morality of society would wither and sink far below its present standard and strength.

Again: the dew is regularly drawn up again by the sun, when it has refreshed the earth; and is thus a fine emblem of the first resurrection, when all the saints shall ascend to meet the Sun of Righteousness in the air. No scene of nature is more lovely than a summer landscape at sunrise, when every field, grove, and hedge is spangled with morning dew. The drops seem to sparkle with conscious delight at the approach of the sun—climbing, as he ascends, to the top of every leaf, as if impatient to meet him in the air. Every admirer of nature has noticed this scene, and watched the dewy vapor rising like incense from the golden censor of

summer. Who has not gazed with rapture on the glowing myriads of dew drops, when each of them is a miniature of the sun which gilds them? And, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise on the morning of the resurrection, the heirs of glory will be as numerous and beautiful as the dew from the womb of the morning—all in the beauty of holiness; for they “shall be like Him when they see him as he is.”

#### NO. IV.

##### A MATRON'S TIMIDITY EXPLAINED.

PERFECT conformity to the Divine image exists only in the Divine presence! Only those who see God face to face, are holy as God is holy. Until we see Him as He actually is, we cannot be fully like him. Nothing but “open vision” can produce an entire moral resemblance between our spirit and the Father of spirits. They little know what perfection means, who imagine that they are “already perfect.” Those, however, are quite as ignorant, and more criminal, who are not trying to perfect holiness in the fear of God. They are certainly very *weak* in intellect, who reckon themselves spotless in heart or character; but they are weaker in conscience and in all principle, who are content to be imperfect, or not much concerned to keep themselves unspotted from the world. And, alas, there are far more of the latter class, than of the former. The *visionaries* of Perfection are but few in numbers, and small in influence; whereas, the *trucklers* to allowed and needless Imperfection, are many and mighty. The name of the Inconsistent is “Legion.”

How do we feel, when we say to ourselves, or when it is proved to us from Scripture and experience, “that perfection is impossible out of Heaven?” Are we glad to hear this? Is it good news to us? We make a very bad use of it, if we employ the fact to excuse our besetting sin, or to exempt us from the trouble of watchfulness and self-denial.—It was never revealed by God, nor avowed by His ministers, for this unholy purpose. God declared it, and Prophets and Apostles confessed it, in order that conscious Imperfection might not drive the followers of Holiness to despair. The *talkers* about holiness do not need the fact, although they use it. Their imperfection, as they call it, neither alarms nor humbles them. They are on very good terms with what is bad in their habits; indeed quite in love with the sin that most easily besets them. It would be no gratification to them to be redeemed from its present power. They intend, of course, to give it up some time, and in time enough (as they think) to leave it still pardonable, or not fatal; but, like Augustine, “not now.”

Not thus lightly, however, do sins or shortcomings sit upon the conscience, or affect the hopes, of godly women. They have to prove their faith by their works; to confirm their hopes by their holiness; to make their calling and election sure, by a growing likeness to Him, to whose image Believers



are "predestinated to be conformed." To them, moreover, it is both a solemn and startling matter, to miss some features of the Divine image in their character; and others in their spirit; and to find all the features of that image so indistinct and unsettled! This discovery causes in them great searchings and sinkings of heart before God. Indeed, something of both continues with a Christian through life. She is never fully "*satisfied*" with her own piety. Like David, she never can be satisfied with herself, until she awake in heaven in all the beauties of that holiness, which is the express moral image of God.

This is one great characteristic of a real Christian: she never is, and never can be, quite satisfied with the *degree* of her own piety. She may, indeed, be quite satisfied that it is of the right kind, both as to its principles and spirit, so far as it goes; but she never thinks that it has gone far enough. She may have no doubt of its sincerity towards God, nor of its salutary influence over herself and her family, nor of its usefulness in her sphere of action; but still, it comes short of her wishes, and even fills her with shame and sorrow. She is not satisfied with herself, whoever else may approve or applaud her. Indeed, nothing humbles her more than compliments from others. Not that she is indifferent to the good opinion of others; but she feels that if they knew her heart as she knows it, they would not think so highly of her. For she is conscious of coldness, where they see nothing but warmth; of ignorance, where they recognize wisdom; of earthly-mindedness, where they acknowledge spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. Like Paul, a real Christian woman feels herself "less than the least of all saints," even when she stands highest in public estimation.

Were this fact well understood, as being characteristic of true piety, it would prevent many Christians from *unchristianizing* themselves so often as they do. They imagine, because they are so *dissatisfied* with themselves, that the satisfaction which others express, is more from kindness than wisdom, or rather friendly than prudent. They wish to think themselves as sincere, right, and safe as their friends say; but they are afraid to conclude that they really are so. "Should I not have the witness in *myself*, if I were, indeed, a child of God?" is their answer to many a prayer and appeal which treats them as daughters of the Lord God Almighty.—"Your arguments may be very true in your own case and in that of others," they say; "but you cannot argue me out of my own feelings, nor persuade me against my own consciousness. I am not satisfied with either my faith or my repentance; my prayers or experience; and for this solid reason:—I see so much in my heart that is bad, and so little in my life that really glorifies God, that I can hardly conceive how there could be any grace where there is so much coldness and deadness. '*O wretched that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*'"

This self-dissatisfaction is, however, a very satis-

factory proof of real piety, in all cases where a real effort is made to be holy in heart and life. There is no great effort to be so, wherever there is self-satisfaction. Those who, like the Laodiceans, are pleased with themselves, are, like them, an "abomination" unto the Lord. They both thought and said, that they had "need of nothing." They took for granted, that they were enlightened enough, clothed enough, and enriched enough, to be quite safe, or on the right side for Eternity. But, what did Christ say to them? "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Thus the men who imagined that they had need of nothing, were found wanting in every thing, when weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, by the Saviour of the Church.

Here is the awful consequence of calculating how little piety will just suffice for safety at last. The Laodiceans seem to have reckoned to a fraction, how little would do. Their question had evidently been, not how much God required, nor how much they could cultivate, nor what would be the advantage of eminent piety; but just, how much is absolutely needed, in order to any chance of escape at last? And whenever a woman comes to reckon in this way, she is sure to let nothing into her list of duties or graces, which she can keep out. The moment she is so infatuated by sloth or worldliness, as to drive a *bargain* in religion, she will drive a *hard* bargain with it; and thus cheat herself to a certainty, whilst trying to cheat it. This is inevitable, whenever a woman tampers with the question,—Where can I stop with safety in the path of holiness? She is sure to stop whenever she dislikes to go, and to make her own convenience limit the meaning of God's requirements.

Now although there may be both some weakness and waywardness in the spirit of those Christians, who give way to doubts and fears, and who "write bitter things" against themselves, whenever they do not feel as they wish, still, their spirit is noble and wise, compared with the spirit of the woman, who cares nothing about how she feels or acts in religion, if she can only keep down the fear of perishing. There is no comparison: it is all *contrast*, between a doubting Christian, and a heedless or heartless professor.

In saying this, however, nothing is farther from my design, than vindicating or even palliating the habit of doubting. It is a bad habit; although infinitely a better one than the habit of taking for granted that all is right before God, when there is nothing flagrantly wrong before men. Still, it is bad; and in this way. It tempts some who witness it to doubt the power of the Gospel; or the truth of the promises; or the freeness of grace. The doubting Christian herself, does not question these things. All her misgivings of heart arise from what she thinks and feels herself to be; and not from any suspicion of the freeness or power of the grace of God. This distinction is not, however, noticed by all observers. Some look only on the surface of such a case; and, when they see a serious and con-

sistent woman, without comfort, and almost without hope at times, they strongly suspect, either that the Gospel is not such good news as ministers say, or that prayer is not so surely answered as the Promises seem to imply. Accordingly, when recent converts see cases of this kind, they are tempted to doubt whether they may not pray in vain too, or strive to no purpose. Those, again, who want an excuse for neglecting prayer, or for remaining undecided, seize upon such cases with avidity, and pretend to be discouraged by them, or warranted from them to doubt whether religion is enjoyment.

Now to both classes I would say, you are equally wrong, in the conclusions you thus draw from the sadness and suspense of weak Believers. They may seem to have no enjoyment in religion, and may even say, that they find no comfort: but, ask them to give up religion for the pleasures of sin; propose to them a return to the world for happiness; offer to them the sweetest cup of earthly enjoyment, in exchange for that cup of salvation, which they hold in their hand without venturing to drink freely of the living water; will they make the exchange, or even listen with patience to the proposal? No, indeed. They will tell you at once, that however unhappy they may feel, they would be miserable, yea, unspeakably wretched, were they to take up with any earthly portion whatever. Not for ten thousand worlds, would they turn their back upon the Saviour or Holiness.

And, is there no grace in this state of mind?—Has prayer been unanswered, where the heart thus prefers to follow Christ even in *darkness*, rather than forsake him for the things of time or sense?—Yea, is there not *enjoyment*, or at least, cause for comfort, in a state of mind which thus prefers the Divine favor and image, to all that the world calls good or great? For, what but grace—special, saving, sanctifying grace, could have wrought this change in the natural spirit of the mind, which is of the earth, earthy? Did doubting Christians reason in this way on their own case, they could not long doubt the reality of their conversion.

Nor is this the only thing which proves that a saving work of grace has been begun in them, by the Spirit of God. The sad light in which they see themselves, arises from the true light in which they see the *character* of God. Had they seen less of His glory, they would be less ashamed of themselves. It is because His character is much before their minds, that their own character stands so low in their estimation. Were they only comparing themselves with others, or their present selves with their former selves, they would be more satisfied with themselves; but they are *contrasting* themselves with infinite purity—with perfect excellence—with unchangeable holiness; and this process of judging, just produces the same effect upon them, which it had upon Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles.

Doubting Christians overlook this fact, and in the hurry and flutter of the moment, forget that the most eminent saints of old, had exactly the same opinion of themselves, whenever they had the same

clear and solemn views of the glorious majesty of Jehovah. Who said, when his eyes saw the true character of God, "*I abhor myself?*" It was Job. Who said, when he saw the glory of God in the Temple, "*Who is me, I am undone?*" It was Isaiah. Who fell at the Saviour's feet as dead, when he bowed the heavens over Patmos, and appeared in his original glory? It was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Who said, "So foolish and ignorant was I: I was as a beast before thee?" when he understood that the prosperity of the wicked was no token of the Divine favor, nor the trials of the righteous any impeachment of the wisdom or the equity of Providence? It was Asaph.

And, were these men not true believers, because thus overwhelmed by a sense of their own vileness and unworthiness? Why; it was their high and holy views of God and the Lamb, that laid them thus low in their own estimation. "No strange thing," therefore, has happened, when even some exemplary Christians are thus troubled, when they think of God. In such cases, He has manifested himself unto them, not only as he does not unto the world, but also differently from the manifestation of his presence to other Christians. I mean, that God brings that view of his own character before the mind of each of his children which is best suited to each of them. Some could not bear to see much of His glorious majesty; and, therefore, God manifests himself to them, chiefly as a tender Father and a watchful Shepherd. Others again cannot bear indulgence, without presuming upon it, or being betrayed by it into some wrong spirit; and He keeps them low and fearful, that they may be humble and watchful. But there is not less paternal love in the one case than in the other. He is equally training both for Heaven, although each by a different process of fatherly discipline.

You, therefore, if rather cheered on in the path of holiness by the soft light of God's countenance, than kept in check from the broad way by awful views of God, have no occasion to suspect your piety because your spirit is not overwhelmed. And you have as little reason to suspect your conversion, if, at times, almost convulsed by your awful views of God, and of yourself before God. The question is—does the light in which he chiefly manifests himself to you, keep you afraid of sin, jealous of the world, and conscientious in the duties of life and godliness? That is the best light for you,—which keeps you walking most humbly and circumspectly with God. And whether the light be lovely or solemn, it will keep you *dissatisfied* with yourself, until you awake in the image of God.

Another cause why some Christians are so low in spirits and hope, is, that their sense of the greatness of the great salvation is more than usually vivid. That salvation spreads out before them in such vastness of grace and glory, that they sink into nothing before its august presence. They can hardly imagine that it can be free to them. They see nothing in any of their own feelings towards "so great salvation," at all great enough or good



enough to prove that they truly value it. They find it impossible to bring up their love or faith, to a height worthy of its unspeakable worth. Thus they lose sight of its freeness, by looking so often and closely to its grandeur.

But are they unbelievers, because they are afraid to hope for a salvation which they thus admire and adore? There is, indeed, *unbelief*, in not venturing to hope as freely as they wonder deeply: but it is not the unbelief of indifference, nor of neglect, nor of formality. It is not the unbelief of the natural mind, nor of impenitence. It is humility sliding into hesitation. It is diffidence sliding into timidity.

For, who gave the doubting Christians such lofty and adoring views of the value of the great salvation? Whence came the light which has so revealed and irradiated to them, the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, that they feel as if nothing less than *angelic* love to Him could be acceptable love; or as if nothing short of Abraham's faith could be true faith?

I am not advocating nor excusing these doubts and fears: but I am, and I avow it, maintaining that their minds are not in nature's darkness, who thus see the glory of salvation: that their hearts are not in sin's or the world's bondage, who thus revere the great salvation: that their spirit is not untouched by the Spirit of God, who thus hesitate because they think nothing good enough as a welcome to that salvation.

I have no doubt of their piety or safety; but I do stand in doubt of the woman who is *satisfied* with either her faith or love towards so great salvation. It must seem but very little to the woman who sees enough in her own feelings and character to do justice to all its claims. Again, therefore, I affirm, that a real Christian cannot be satisfied with herself, until she awake in the image of God.

Another cause of that dissatisfaction with themselves, which keeps the hopes and hearts of some Christians very low, is, their high and holy estimate of the work and witness of the Holy Spirit. His agency, or influence, means *so much* in their judgment, that they cannot think how any thing they have felt, or are capable of feeling, could amount to being "born again of the Spirit." Indeed, it is only by ascribing and giving credit to others, for more fruits of the Spirit than others possess, that such persons can admit that any change is a *Divine* change. They believe that other Christians are much holier than they *seem*; and thus account for their being happier than themselves.

Now, although there is some mistake in all this, the error is on the safe side. Better rate the work of the Holy Spirit too high than too low. Better hesitate to call any ordinary change Divine, than call every moral improvement regeneration, or every conviction conversion. But there is no occasion for thus going to either extreme. Neither the work nor the witness of the Spirit is a doubtful thing, wherever there is humility before God, and

an honest desire to be like God. These are principles which can neither be taught nor learned without the Holy Spirit. They are not natural, and they are never acquired by mere human effort.—Indeed, no one tries or wishes to be truly humble before God, until the Spirit of God touch the heart.

Let not, therefore, the timidity, nor even the trembling, the doubts nor the fears, of some "holy women," dishearten you, or draw you into suspicions of the efficacy of the Gospel to console as well as to sanctify. It can do both equally. Its promises have only to be as simply welcomed by your doubting friends, as its precepts are meekly obeyed by them, in order to their being as happy as they are humble. Sheshbazzar would say to each of them, "Woman, why weepest thou? Shake the mulberry trees in the valley of Baca; and make it a well; and thus go from strength to strength, until you appear before God in Zion."

The YOM HACCHIPURIM, the great day of Atonement was drawing nigh; and, from Dan to Beersheba, the Israelites were preparing to appear before God in Zion. "The songs of Degrees" were reviewed in every family, that they might be repeated and sung in the wilderness; and every man that was right-hearted said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!"

Amongst those who waited for the "Consolation of Israel," none in Beersheba had appeared in Zion so often as Sheshbazzar. From year to year he had cheered the aged, and charmed the young, on their pilgrimage. His proverbs met all cases, and his smiles or tears suited all hearts. He wept with the weeping, and rejoiced with the joyful. And yet, Sheshbazzar was a man that had seen affliction. The Angel of Death had said twice, "Write that man a widower;" and the "desire of his eyes" was taken away at a stroke. The Angel of Death stood on the tomb of his grief, and said again, "Write that man childless;" and it was done. His heart bled, but it never murmured. He said that each loss had become a new link between his heart and heaven; and that now, like the High Priest's breast-plate, it was so linked, all around, that it could not fall. The young wondered, and the aged blessed the God of Israel, who gave consolation in trouble, "and songs in the night."

His fellow-pilgrims regarded him as almost a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, whilst journeying with him in the wilderness.—They resolved to ask him what was the *secret* of his consolation under so many calamities. They asked, and the old man answered with a heavenly smile, "*I shake the mulberry trees.*" It was a dark saying, and they understood him not; but knowing that he never spake unadvisedly with his lips, they pondered that saying in their hearts.

Sheshbazzar knew that their curiosity was neither idle nor impertinent, and said, "When we come to

the valley of Baca, I will explain myself." They came to the valley of Baca, and, behold, it was very dry! The streams in the desert were passed away like the summer brook, and the heavens gave no sign of rain. The pilgrims were panting "as the hart for the water-brooks," but found none. All eyes were turned to Sheshbazzar. "Shake the mulberry trees," he said. They shook them, and dew, pure and plenteous as "the dew of Hermon," began to pour from every leaf. They made wells around the mulberry trees to prevent the showers from being absorbed in the sand of the desert, and then shook the trees again. They drank; but, though refreshed, they were *not satisfied*. They looked to Sheshbazzar again. His eyes were up unto God. He raised "the song of Degrees" in that "pure and plenteous as" the dew of Hermon," and sung, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." The pilgrims paused. No cloud appeared on Carmel, and no sound of rain was heard from the wings of the wind. "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious?" was a question quivering on the parched lips of many. Sheshbazzar alone was utterly unmoved. He raised again the song of Degrees, and his rich and mellow-toned voice sounded in the wilderness like the jubilee-trumpet amongst the mountains of Jerusalem. The pilgrims listened as if an angel had sung:—"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. The Lord is thy keeper: The Lord is thy shade upon the right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and for evermore." He paused, and bowed his head, and worshipped. The pilgrims felt their faith in God reviving, and renewed their part of the song: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. And whilst they sung, "the Lord gave a plenteous rain" to refresh his weary heritage in the wilderness.

When they had drank, and were satisfied, and had blessed the God of their fathers, Sheshbazzar said,—“My children! the PROMISES of God are the mulberry trees in this valley of tears. The dew of heaven lies all night on their branches, and some dew may always be shaken from them. When I was widowed, like our father Jacob, I shook that unfading mulberry tree, ‘The LORD liveth; and blessed be the rock of my salvation.’ When like David, our king, I was bereaved of my children, I shook that broad-branching mulberry tree, ‘I will be unto thee a better portion than sons or daughters.’ Accordingly, I have found no trial, without finding some dew of consolation upon the trees of promise, whenever I shook them. And when more was necessary, God has strengthened me with strength in my soul.”

The pilgrims looked at the mulberry trees in the valley of Baca, which they had shaken, and smiled

complacently on the good old man. He saw it, and continued his parable:—

“It was not whilst Job pondered and brooded over his calamities, that he said of God, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him:’ he was shaking the mulberry trees when he said this; and when he said, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ Abraham would never have yielded Isaac to the altar, if he had not shaken that great mulberry tree—‘*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*’”

Thus the pilgrims went on, “from strength to strength,” listening to the wisdom of Sheshbazzar; and “every one of them” appeared “before God in Zion.”

It is, perhaps, quite as necessary to explain the implicit faith of some matrons, as the doubting faith of others.

Amongst many fond and fanciful names, which Sheshbazzar's young friends bestowed upon him, the favorite one, with them, was—the Beershebean Eagle. Agreeably to this title, his grove, upon the hill of vineyards, was called the Eagle's Nest.—The emblem was not misapplied; for “as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings,” so Sheshbazzar, guarded and guided his young friends. It was not often, however, that the old man could climb the hill of vineyards to visit the eagle's nest. His favorite seat was under his fig tree. But there—his young friends could not be alone with him. The elders of Beersheba often visited him there, after the evening sacrifice; and some of them had no sympathy with the vivacity of the young. Sheshbazzar's *eaglets* seemed, to them, to require checks rather than encouragements. He himself was often told, that if he did not *clip* their wings, they would soon flee off from the ark of the covenant, and, like Noah's raven, never return. Sheshbazzar was wont to say, in answer to this, “that wings were not made to be clipped: if their flight be well directed, they cannot be too wide, nor too strong. Let us treat the young as Noah did the dove; welcoming them into the ark of our confidence whenever they are weary, and never putting them upon the wing except for sacred purposes; then, like the dove, they will return ‘bringing an olive leaf’ to garland our grey hairs.”

The elders of Beersheba had not been treated thus in the days of their youth; and, therefore, they did not understand the principles of Sheshbazzar's conduct. “It is one of your *odd* ways,” they said, “and whoever lives to see the end of it will find that the old way of checking is the best.” He meekly answered, “We can never check what is evil in the young, unless we cherish what is good in them.” Agreeably to this maxim, he requested his young friends to meet him in the grove after the hour of the morning sacrifice.

They came to the eagle's nest, full of the recoi-



lections of the former evening, and evidently mortified by them. Sheshbazzar saw this, and began, at once, to characterize his aged friends; that, in the presence of their sterling worth, their slight weaknesses might be forgotten.

"We can appreciate and admire," said Esrom, "the meek patience of *Gether*, and the warm zeal of *Laish*, and the solemn piety of *Mahlon*, and the cedar-like integrity of *Jasher*; but we can learn nothing from their lips. Their character is eloquent, whilst they remain silent. When they speak, the charm dissolves; for they are all men of *one* idea, or their thoughts have no connection. How is their character thus superior to their knowledge? You often tell us, that we shall never *act* better than we *know*. Are they not exceptions to this rule?"

"Not in the least, Esrom," said Sheshbazzar; "and, when you have more than *one* idea of this subject, you will find that their character is superior, not to their knowledge, but to their talents and tongues. Each of them knows experimentally that the God of his fathers is the God of SALVATION; and that single truth, when vividly and habitually realized, by minds of any order, is quite sufficient to account for any degree of hope or holiness. The minds of the elders are, indeed, comparatively narrow; but they are completely *full*, and absorbed with the TRUTH of TRUTHS;—and a SERAPH'S mind cannot be more than full! I should, indeed, prefer to see their thoughts in clusters like the grapes, and in ears like the corn, or at least, *threaded* like the pearls of the Queen of Sheba; but pearls do not grow in strings, and the wine is sweetest when the grapes are picked off from the stalks, and the ear must be broken up before the corn can be made into bread." Thus Sheshbazzar played with the subject, that he might divert the attention of his eaglets from it. But RACHEL was there, and she had been wounded, as well as mortified, by the cold looks and cutting sarcasms of the elders; and as she was now more intent upon excelling in character, than on shining in talent or knowledge, she repeated the question—How do these good men *act* better than they *understand*?

Sheshbazzar denied again that they did. "They merely act better than they *explain*. They have reasons for their conduct and spirit, although they cannot always '*render a reason*' in words. Their reasons may be few, but they are not weak. The *form* of them may not be philosophical nor fascinating; but the substance of them is divine. The simple considerations—'This is the will of God,'—'That is for the glory of God,'—'Thus the Patriarchs acted,'—determine the character of the elders, as effectually as the sublimest forms of these facts could sway the master-spirits of the universe, and far more effectually than your poetical reasons influence your faith or practice."

"My children," said the old man, and he became solemn as a dying man, "mistake not my meaning nor motives. I look at you too often not to see it, and love you too well not to tell it—your minds are not yet full! nor happy by what you know of the

God of your fathers, as the God of salvation. Your hearts are still divided between God and the world. You are afraid to forget or forsake Him, and it is well; but you do not delight to be often *alone* with him in prayer, nor to meditate upon His character, except when your thoughts assume forms of mystery or majesty. You are rather fascinated by *sublime* ideas of Jehovah, than affected by sweet or solemn ideas. His character attracts you more by the boundless range which it opens to your excursive imagination, than by the solid basis it affords for your eternal hopes. Accordingly, were your best thoughts resolved into their simple elements, they would lose more than one half of their hold upon you. The facts of the great salvation, without its figures, would be held tame by you—so much are you the creatures of fancy. But what are the constellated images with which genius has enshrined, as with another 'cloud of glory,' the ark of the covenant; compared with the simple fact, that our God is the God of salvation? This truth duly apprehended and appreciated, would render the ark of the covenant glorious in your eyes, even if the shechinah were removed from it, or had never rested upon it."

"True, father," said Rachel, "blushing as she spoke; "but the God who gave the covenant of promise, gave the shechinah of glory along with it. He himself has invested and enshrined even the truth of truths with its chief attractions, and thrown around it all the pomp and plenitude of imagery."

"I grant it, my daughter—readily grant it, and cordially rejoice in the '*divers manners*' in which God spoke unto our fathers by the prophets. I feel that I owe much both to the splendid and the mysterious forms in which the great salvation has been revealed. I doubt, from the character of my own mind, whether the covenant, if given in simpler forms, would have arrested my wayward attention, so as to win and fix my volatile heart. The majesty of God's language is, however, a part of God's infinite *condescension*. Nor must we forget the character of our nation, when He multiplied and heightened the hallowed enshrinements of the covenant. Noah required no shechinah on Ararat, nor Abraham on Moriah, to endear the covenant to them, or to induce them to set the bloody seal of sacrifice to it. Both the magnificence and the variety of Mosaic worship are, therefore, the measure of our fathers' minds, when they came out of Egypt and settled in Canaan.

"But I have no wish to evade the force of Rachel's remark. God has as evidently diversified the forms of truth to please the mind, as the flavor of fruits, or the color of flowers, to gratify the senses. The food of the soul is obviously from the same hand as the food of the body. It is not, however, the rind of the pomegranate, nor the bloom of the grape, nor the golden tinge of the corn, that we prize most. We do prize these lovely hues as proofs of ripeness, but the *nourishment* is in the fruit which they beautify: so it is with revealed truth.

'I have thought, too, at times, that there are deeper reasons for the profusion of figurative language in the word of God, than some suspect. For, by thus seizing upon all the sublime and lovely objects in nature, and consecrating them to the illustration of the Divine character and government, so that they burn as lamps around the eternal throne, God has created a grand antidote against IDOLATRY. The natural objects which are the gods of other nations are thus made the mere *servants* of the true God, or only the shadows of his glory: so that what they worship, we employ as helps in his worship. And, who could bow to the sun shining in his strength, or kiss the hand to the moon walking in her brightness, who had once read, that God is the 'Father of lights, without variableness or the shadow of turning?' ESROM! you can follow out this hint; it is quite in your line of things.

"And, Rachel, the following hint is in your line. There is a strong tendency to extremes in the human mind. Some who love nature with enthusiasm, loathe religion, or conceal their dislike to it under the thin veil of polite and vague compliments. Others love religion with unquestionable cordiality; but, from seeing the votaries of nature averse to the word and worship of Jehovah, they are afraid of nature, and inclined to frown upon every reference to its beauties or sublimities. They thus seem to think that a star or a flower is as likely as Baal or Ashtaroth, to estrange the human mind from God and godliness. In their estimation, it is heresy to speak well of "the sweet influences of the Pleiades;" and empty sentimentality to be affected by the varied scenery of the heavens or the earth. They confine themselves to scriptural language, and yet forget that it is full of nature! The word of God registers all the works of God, and calls them all forth 'in their season,' to do homage to itself and its subjects; and yet these good people seem unconscious of the fact. Was it not as an antidote against this divorce of nature from religion, that God incorporated with the revelation of eternal things so many appeals to the scenes and seasons of nature? RACHEL, this is in your new line of things. Whilst you were prayerless, you were a mere sentimentalist; and only too willing to find excuses for the neglect of the Scriptures. You preferred the *works* of God to the *word* of God. This proved how little you read the latter, and how superficially you studied the former. Nothing honors nature so highly as the Bible has done. Moses and the Prophets have looked upon the heavens and the earth with a more poetic eye than the poets of antiquity, or the harpers of our own times."

Thus the Eagle of Beersheba guarded and guided his young.

#### NO. V.

##### THE MARYS AT THE CROSS.

THERE are no familiar expressions which a Christian understands better, or means more by, than the emphatic words,—“visiting Calvary,”—“going to

the Cross,”—“leaning on the Cross,”—“kneeling at the Cross,”—“clinging to the Cross,”—“looking to the Cross.” In one or other of these consecrated forms of speech, a Christian embodies all that is best in the spirit of his penitence, and of his faith, and of his devotion. Indeed, when his heart is not at the Cross, his penitence is neither deep nor tender; his faith neither strong nor lively; his devotion neither sweet nor solemn. Whenever he ceases to glory in the Cross, he sinks into coldness or formality. And if he quit the Cross, or lose sight of it, he loses both hope and heart, until he get back to it again.

Nothing of this experience has, of course, any connection with the use that was once made of crosses and crucifixes, in religion. When they were most in use, such experience was least known. More hearts, and more of each heart, have been won to Christ crucified by the preaching of the Cross, than by all the visible exhibitions of it which painting ever embodied, or sculpture emblazoned.—When crosses were most numerous, real Christians were fewest, and the real Cross least influential.—This is only what might be expected. Emblems, by bringing home the crucifixion to the senses, kept the understanding and the heart far off from its great principles, and its true spirit.

But whilst Christian experience itself has had nothing to do with the once popular uses of a visible cross, the language in which that experience speaks, is, in no small degree, both derived and enriched from this old source. The familiar expressions which once described what the body did at a cross, or with a crucifix, now describes exactly what the soul tries to do when contemplating the Lamb of God, slain for the sin of the world. Not, however, that the scriptural worship of Protestantism is thus an intended or conscious imitation of the bodily service of Popery: no, indeed: such an idea never occurs to the mind, even when it is clasping and clinging to the Cross in thought, just as superstition did to the symbol in action.

We are not, however, indebted to superstition for all our emphatic forms of expressing the exercise of faith or penitence, at the Cross. Superstition itself borrowed the elements of its best language, on this subject, from the word of God. Both the holding up of the crucifix, by the priest, and the looking at it, by the penitent, are literal imitations: the one of setting forth Christ “openly crucified,” and the other of believing on Him with the heart. In like manner, the postures and gestures of superstition at a cross, are imitations of the real or supposed conduct of the Marys on Calvary. Their conduct, however, deserves something better than popish imitation, or even than Protestant admiration. It is more complimented than understood. The Marys were, indeed, “the last at the Cross, and the first at the Sepulchre, of Christ;” and felt, no doubt, all that poetry or piety has ascribed to them, on that solemn occasion. They must, however, have felt far more, and in another way, than is usually supposed. For, unless the Virgin Mary be an excep-



tion to the others, they had not exactly our views of the death of Christ, to guide their feelings.—What we look at as an atoning sacrifice offered to God, they saw chiefly as an atrocious murder perpetrated by man. Whilst we see chiefly, on Calvary, the flashing sword of Divine Justice, and the bursting vials of Divine Anger, they saw only the gleaming of the Roman arms, and the glare of Jewish vengeance. Where we hear chiefly the thunders of the Divine Law, they heard only the ferocious execrations of a frantic mob. Their feelings, whilst witnessing the crucifixion, could not therefore be akin to our feelings whilst contemplating it. Their sorrow, then, deep, and melting, and genuine as it was, was not penitence, nor was their overwhelming depression humility. Their love to Christ was, indeed, at its height, when his own love to them and to the world was highest; but it was not as an *atoning* Saviour they loved him then.

They did, however, love him then and before, as a Saviour: yea, as the only Saviour. It is as much *under* the sober truth to ascribe their love to Christ unto sympathy, friendship, or ordinary gratitude, as it is *beyond* the truth, to ascribe it unto faith in the atoning efficacy or design of his death. Two of the Marys, at least, cannot be supposed to have known or believed more, at the time, than the Apostles did: and they neither understood then what Christ had foretold of his resurrection, nor approved what he had foretold of his death. Accordingly, the women were as hopeless as the men, on the morning of the third day, until the Angels told them of his resurrection: for it was not to welcome a living Saviour, but to complete the entombment of the dead Saviour, that they went so early and eagerly to the sepulchre. The “sweet spices” they brought to “anoint Him,” prove that they had no hope of finding him alive then. Mark xvi. 1. They were not, however, without faith in Him, as the Saviour, even then. Mary of Magdala continued to speak of Him as her “Lord,” even when she supposed that his body had been removed from the sepulchre, and laid somewhere else. John xx. 13. “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him,” was her first answer to the Angels, when they said to her, “Woman, why weepest thou?” I would not graft too much meaning upon the word “Lord” itself, in this instance; nor upon her use of it at the time. I will suppose nothing more, than that she used it then just in the sense she had been accustomed to attach to it, whilst the Saviour was alive: and there is no reason whatever, to think that His death had altered her opinion of either his Messiahship or his Sonship. It had, no doubt, blasted all her hope of seeing Him establish that temporal kingdom on earth, which all the disciples expected: but it withered none of the hopes of pardon and eternal life, which she had formerly planted upon the power and promises of the Son of God.

This is the real point to be kept in view, whilst judging of the motives and emotions of the Marys at the Cross. They did not understand that the

Lamb of God was then taking away the sin of the world, or laying down his life as a ransom for them; but they had no doubt, even then, of his being the Lamb of God, nor of his being their Saviour. All their conduct on Calvary, and especially the honorable and costly funeral they prepared for Christ, prove, to a demonstration, that their “hope in Christ” had not died with him. It does not seem to have dimmed at all, even when the sun became darkness; nor to have shaken at all, even when the earth shook and trembled; nor to have drooped at all, even when the sepulchre was sealed. Their hope of salvation was then as much with him “in Paradise,” as the spirit of the penitent thief was there with him.

The truth of these strong assertions lies on the very surface of the narrative; and applies equally to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Indeed, there is no evidence, direct or indirect, that the death of Christ overthrew the spiritual hopes, or altered the spiritual opinions, of any of the disciples. It upset all their hope of a temporal kingdom, or of what they called, “redeeming Israel;” but it does not seem to have brought the shadow of either a doubt or a suspicion upon their minds, in regard to his Divine character or mission. They all forsook Him, indeed, at the crisis of his fate; but not from unbelief, but from fear and consternation. The sheep scattered when the Good Shepherd was smitten; but they did so lest they themselves should be smitten with him; and not because they had ceased to consider him as the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. The idea of imposture, or fraud of any kind, on His part, never seems to have crossed their minds, even when appearances were most against his claims. John obeyed that dying injunction of Christ, “Behold thy mother!” as promptly and cordially as ever he obeyed any command given by Christ, when in the plenitude of his power and glory. “From that hour that disciple took her into his own house.” John xix. 27. In like manner, the very “sadness” of the two disciples, on the way to Emmaus, proves, beyond all doubt, that their opinion of their Lord’s integrity had undergone no change by his death. Their spirit would have been bitter or indignant, not sad only, if they had thought him a deceiver. Besides, they did not hesitate nor fault to say of Him, even then, that he was both “Jesus of Nazareth,” and “a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”

The conduct of the Marys is, however, still more decisive. They never would have followed Christ with tears to Calvary, nor stood either nigh to or afar off from the Cross, if they had changed their opinion of his truth or of his grace. They did not, indeed, recognise Him as then sealing the everlasting covenant with his blood; but they evidently saw Him sealing the truth of both his gracious promises and his high pretensions by his blood; for it was (and they knew it) because he would not retract nor qualify his high claims, that he was condemned and crucified. Accordingly, at his burial, they acted a part, throughout, in perfect harmony with strong

and unaltered faith in both his truth and grace.—For, who does not see at a glance, that the Marys neither would nor could have lavished their attentions and tenderness upon His funeral, if they had doubted his faithfulness or his sincerity? Besides, Mary of Magdala had a living proof, in her own bosom, of His Divine power. He had “cast out seven devils” from her spirit: and, as they did not return when he was imprisoned, nor whilst he hung on the cross, nor even when he died, she could not but be sure that his death had neither disproved his power, nor discredited his character.

I bring out these facts with some care, because they enable us to make a right use of the example of these holy women: for, they are thus, perfect models of faith in the truth of the Saviour's promises, and of love to the Saviour's character. That faith and love they cherished, avowed, and exemplified, when all the aspects of the universe seemed to frown upon, and to fight against, His person and mission. Neither the cowardly flight of his friends, nor the reckless fury of His enemies, moved the Marys. They “stood by the cross,” when the cross itself could hardly stand on the quaking mount.—They forsook him not, even when they heard him declare that God had “forsaken” him!

They did not, of course, understand, at the time, the mystery of that judicial “*LAMA SABACHTHANI*,” but neither its mystery, nor its terrors, alienated their affection or their confidence from the Saviour.—“None of these things moved” them! Shall, then, *less* things move you from the Cross of Christ?—This is the point I wanted to bring you to. Now, if the Marys did and endured so well, whilst the death of Christ was before them only as a murder and a martyrdom,—what a height both their faith and love would have risen to, had they known, as you know, that it was an atoning Sacrifice, securing “eternal inheritance” to all in heaven, who had died in the faith of Christ; and “eternal redemption” to all on earth, who should then or afterwards believe on him! Oh, had they seen then, as you see now, how all the curse of the Law was cancelled by His bearing its curse; how all the perfections of Jehovah were satisfied and glorified in the highest, by His voluntary submission to their will; how all the balance and basis of the Divine government were established for ever, by His one offering of himself as the votary of their holiness, and as the victim of their justice;—had the Marys been aware of all this, whilst they stood by the Cross, their conduct and spirit, noble as these were, would have been nobler still! Surely, then, your conduct and spirit should not, need not, be inferior to theirs; seeing your knowledge of the glory of the Cross is so much superior to any and all that they possessed, when they thus rose above the fear of peril and reproach, and balanced all the mysteries of the crucifixion by faith in the character of the CRUCIFIED ONE.

There is, indeed, mystery about the Cross still.—And, why should there not? I will not answer this question by reminding you, that there is mystery in every thing great and small, mental and material,

throughout the universe. But, whilst this fact should teach us to expect it in the Cross too, our own character and spirit may well suggest to us, that our “faith and patience” require some “trial,” in common with others.

The Marys were not exempted: and why should we be so? They had to believe and obey, when there was more mystery and less majesty around the Cross, than now invest it: for now the crown of thorns, and the mock robe and reed of supremacy, are exchanged for the real crown and sceptre of universal government; the scornful “Hail, King of the Jews,” is followed by the vying and everlasting “Hallelujahs” of all the armies of heaven: the central cross on Calvary is succeeded by the “middle seat on the eternal throne:” the momentary frown of judicial anger, has given place for ever to the endless and unalterable complacency of paternal love: the keys of death and the invisible world hang upon the “vesture dipped in blood,” and He who was “numbered with transgressors,” is now identified with Deity, in all the homage and glory which saints or angels can render. If, therefore, the miracles which the Marys saw, and the voices from heaven which they heard, proved to them the Divinity of Christ, and counterbalanced all the wants and woes of His earthly lot; surely His place on the throne and in the worship of Heaven, may well overpower every difficulty which reason meets, or speculation suspects, in the Divinity and glory of the Saviour.

I neither profess to solve the mystery of His incarnation and sacrifice, nor pretend to be unaffected by it; but I do claim the right to be heard and heeded when I say to you, that an atoning Saviour is the universal creed of Heaven, and the only creed on earth which converts sinners, or consoles saints.

Happily, only a few females, amongst the increasing thousands and tens of thousands of the intellectual, have had the fool-hardiness to stand forward in open hostility to the Godhead of the Saviour. This pitiable *contrast* to all the pure spirits around the eternal throne—this monstrous *singularity*, in a universe which adores the Lamb,—is not presented by many of your sex. Long may it be proverbially true of the sex at large, that they are still the last to quit the Cross, and the first to visit the Sepulchre.

You have, perhaps, some reproach to encounter, in thus imitating the Marys. Well; brave and bear it as they did. Had they not dared all hazards, how many souls might have been lost, whom their noble example has won to Christ? Had they shrunk back from owning Him, after having received so much grace from him, how many traitors and cowards might have sprung from their timidity? And should you flee or flinch from the Cross, in order to escape “the reproach” of it, you will peril more souls than your own.

It is, indeed, a trying dilemma when a wife or a daughter cannot “confess Christ” in their family, without giving offence. It is a very strong tempt-



ation to be silent, or to compromise evangelical truth, when the avowal of that truth breaks the peace and harmony of home. Firmness is, however, kindness to the opposers. There is no such cruelty to an unbelieving partner, parent, or brother, as breaking faith with Christ, in order to keep the peace with them. For, what is this peace, whilst you must carry about with you the horrible consciousness that they must perish by their unbelief, and that you are abetting that unbelief! I invoke, adjure, you to consider this! For, could you so conceal your faith from them, as to satisfy them, without perilling your own soul, you would but more effectually peril their souls.

Look again at the Marys, and be firm. Depend upon it, if you have to witness for Christ at home, your firmness will eventually win souls at home, as well as save yourself. Let "AZUR and ZALMON" suggest to you, how you may join fidelity with tenderness, in dealing with "the enemies of the cross of Christ."

AZUR and ZALMON were "Hebrews of the Hebrews," and had been Pharisees of the Pharisees; but both had renounced Judaism for Christianity, although from different principles. Zalmon was one by the EXAMPLE of Christ: AZUR by the ATONEMENT of Christ. Zalmon was fond of the Oriental and Grecian philosophers who speculated on Christianity; AZUR refused to associate with them, and would not acknowledge them as believers.—He loved Zalmon as the friend of his youth, but treated his pretensions to be a Christian as unfounded; for they had been advanced in this form and spirit:

"I can no longer resist the evidences of Christianity," said Zalmon: "like the autumnal floods of Jordan, they bear unto the DEAD Sea every objection, as it comes within the mighty sweep of their swellings. The all-perfect character of Jesus demonstrates his Messiahship: it was so pure, and yet so social withal; so unbending in principle, and yet so bland in manners withal; so tried by calamity, and yet so patient withal. Although he was dragged from the cradle to the cross, as it were, on the hurdle of poverty, by the wild horses of slander and persecution, neither agony nor ignominy could alienate him from his *mission*, nor alter his character. Like light, he passed through every medium uncontaminated. Not to be a Christian, therefore, is irrational."

"If you mean by his *mission*, his MEDIATION," said AZUR, "I congratulate you upon your conversion: and, whatever you mean, Zalmon, I hail your triumph over the prejudices which blind our nation to the beauty of the Saviour's holiness. But in your philosophical circle, it is become fashionable to reduce his death to the rank of a *martyrdom* for truth, and to exalt his example on the ruins of his Cross. I may not own this as Christianity: I stand in doubt of you."

"I suspected, AZUR, that you would," said ZALMON; you live amongst little minds; I move amongst the sages of the city. You are smitten with the love

of *mystery*; I am, with the love of VIRTUE. It is enough for me to find in Christ, the Sun of Moral Righteousness: in that capacity he will hold an eternal meridian, and shine with healing in his wings, until righteousness become universal. Such an example the world wanted; and, having found it in Christ, wants nothing more for salvation. Here my faith *begins and ends*."

"Zalmon! be serious: thus the faith of NICODEMUS began. He acknowledged Christ to be a *Teacher* sent from God; and Christ treated the avowal as unworthy of his notice. He did not welcome the *meagre* compliment, but proceeded to teach the 'Master in Israel,' that the SON of God was sent into the world to be lifted up on the Cross, as a sacrifice for *sin*. Remember this fact; and 'marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again.'"

"My early and tried friend, I will be serious. I have marked, AZUR, the fact you mention, and feel staggered by its bearings. It is to the point. And, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, I cannot forget that, under the law, the pardon of sin was *inseparable* from sacrifice. The principle of ATONEMENT was as prominent in our once holy system, as the Temple in our holy city. All this I frankly concede to be fact; but pretend not to understand it. My present opinion is, that the perfect EXAMPLE of Christ, and his illumination of IMMORTALITY, by raising the standard of morals, render sacrifice unnecessary."

"Zalmon! Zalmon! sacrifices are, indeed, unnecessary now; but on your *new* principles, they were always *useless* and unmeaning. 'The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin,' nor open the gates of Paradise to the spirits of our fathers. Think me not harsh, because I am warm. You have forsaken Judaism without embracing Christianity. Neither Christ nor Moses would now own you as his disciple. You occupy a place against which Sinai and Calvary equally roll their thunders. Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? Let them flatter you who love you not: I love you, and therefore warn you. And now, having done so, I will *reason* with you. Was not the Messiah promised to the Fathers? And did not the *faithful* of all ages '*rejoice*' to see his day, even afar off? But, if he came only to *teach* and *exemplify* VIRTUE, what *benefit* could *they* derive from his work? They *expected* benefit from his mission, and died in the faith of reaping its blessings; but if these consist in his *EXAMPLE*, they rejoiced without cause; for all the influence of an example, however good extends only *forward*, not *backward*. On your principles, therefore, the Fathers had neither part nor lot in the *mission of Christ*."

"True, AZUR: but if the Fathers *needed* neither part nor lot in it, what follows?"

"If they did not! Zalmon, are you or they the best *judge* of their need? If their guilt, and their sense of it, be judged from the *number* of their sin-offerings, their need of salvation was absolute. Besides they looked beyond the sacrifices to the atone-

ment typified by them; and thus avowed their need of a Divine propitiation. In a word, they expected the Lamb of God to take away their sin by the sacrifice of himself."

"PROVE that, Azur, and I will vie with you in glorying only in the Cross. But the Fathers were in Paradise *before* the Lamb was slain. Their spirits were carried by angels into Abraham's bosom as they departed. They were, therefore, saved *without* the atonement."

"No, Zalmon; they were saved *before* it, but not without it. What saith the Scriptures? 'God hath set forth (Christ Jesus) to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are *PAST*, through the forbearance of God.' Here, *past sins* refer not only to the former sins of *living* believers, but also to the sins of all believers under the first covenant: for the death of Christ declares the righteousness of God in forbearing and forgiving them. The faithful of former ages were, therefore, justified and glorified, in virtue of Christ's pledge to die for them at the fulness of time. On that ground they were admitted into heaven when they died; but their 'eternal inheritance' was not *confirmed* until his 'death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament.' Thus the Atonement had a *retrospective* influence of the *same kind* as its present and prospective influence. And, that the Fathers expected this, yea, calculated upon it, is self-evident from all the prophets. They taught the Church to *realize* the sufferings of Christ, at the sacrifice for her sins; and to speak as if the Lamb had *been* 'slain from the foundation of the world.' 'He *was* wounded for our transgressions, he *was* bruised for our iniquities; surely he *hath* borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' Thus they both felt their need of an atonement, and knew that it would be made for them. It has been made; and since that moment, the Old Testament saints have 'sung a New Song' in heaven, saying with a loud voice—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain for us.'"

"AZUR, if your views of the sacrifices be right, your system is as harmonious as it is sublime. My scheme, I must confess, does not agree with the *whole* word of God. The *sacrifices*, especially, are not duly explained by it."

"Explained by it, Zalmon! they are utterly *useless* in it. And yet that they were of Divine appointment, is self-evident; for neither reason nor superstition could have suggested them. And then, no act of worship was ever so signally honored with the Divine approbation as sacrifice. 'The *cloud of glory*' travelled from altar to altar, like the sun through the signs of the Zodiac, irradiating and ratifying them all. But, on your principles, the high solemnities of sacrifice, which thus charmed and chained down the Shechinah to the earth, were neither useful nor instructive! 'To the Law and the Testimony,' Zalmon; and since your philosophers 'speak not according to these,' depend on it, 'there is no *light* in them,'—Patriarchism, Judaism, and Christianity, unite in confirming the Di-

vine maxim, that 'without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' There is, therefore, nothing between us and hell, but the BLOOD OF THE LAMB."

"If such be the fact, Azur, God be merciful to me a sinner! And 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.'"

"AMEN, Zalmon, and Amen! You will now visit Calvary, as the Marys did after the Resurrection. They neither saw its glories, nor understood its solemnities, on the day of the Crucifixion. I often think with what different feelings they stood at the Cross, when they knew it to be the ALTAR of Eternal Redemption! Then, how all they had seen and heard on the great day of atonement would rise upon them in forms of supernal majesty and supreme glory! Yes—and I find, like them, that my first visit was not my best. I feel ashamed of my first appreciations of the Sacrifice of Christ; they were so vague. And still I have much to learn!"

## NO. VI.

### THE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE.

PAUL, when enumerating the successive manifestations of Christ to the disciples, by which "many infallible proofs" of the truth of the Resurrection were given, adds with great emphasis, "Last of all he was seen of me." If Mary of Magdala lived long enough to hear or read this exclamation, how naturally and emphatically she must have exclaimed, "*First of all, He was seen of me.*" It is not improbable that both she and the other female witnesses of the Resurrection, did live to read or hear St. Paul's personal testimony to this great truth.—How, then, do you think, did they approve of being left out of the list of witnesses by Paul; seeing they were the first persons to whom the Saviour "showed himself alive?" The four Evangelists had not treated them thus, in their Gospels. In each of the Gospels, the Marys are placed at the head of the "great cloud of witnesses," which attest the Resurrection. Why, then, are they not so in the Epistles also? Obviously, because it would have been no kindness to the Marys, whatever honor it might have been to them: for, as Paul's Epistles were chiefly addressed to Gentile Churches, and as persecution raged in Judea at the time, any reference to the Marys, or to the women of Galilee, as the first witnesses, might have drawn more visitors around them than they could conveniently, or wisely, or safely welcome. Thus both their character and their life might have been periled, had their names been made as public and imperishable in the Epistles, as they were in the Gospels. Paul's silence was, therefore, the shield of their holy reputation, and of their precarious life. Both these were hazarded quite enough, by the publicity and popularity which their names had acquired in Judea.

Besides, you can easily conceive, from their character and spirit, how they would count it honor enough, for them, to have seen the Lord "first,"



even if there had been no notice taken of the fact, by the Evangelists. The sweet consciousness that His first appearance was to them—that His first “All hail” of welcome was to them—that His first smile, after the sorrows of death, beamed on them; and that His first words, after the silence of the grave, were addressed to them: this, all this, must have been joy unspeakable and inexpressible. The Marys could no more forget it, or be unsatisfied with it, than the Angels who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and wrapped up the linen clothes within, can cease to remember or to enjoy the high honor bestowed on them, when thus permitted to minister to Christ, as He rose from the dead. Such honor had not all the angels of God then. They were all allowed to worship the Son alike, when God brought “in the First-Begotten into the world:” but when He “brought Him again from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant,” only “two Angels” were admitted to witness, or worship, or serve, on that august occasion.

It would be an equally useless and fruitless inquiry, to ask why this honor was confined to so few of the angels, or why it was conferred upon these two; it is not, however, useless to inquire why the Saviour showed himself first to the Marys, when he arose from the dead. This was a marked preference, and, therefore, it must have had practical reasons, whether we can discover them all or not.

The great general reason for this preference is to be found in the condition of the sex at large, at the time. They had, then, neither that place in the Church, nor that rank in society, which they now enjoy. Male and female were not “one” in Moses, as they are now “all one in Christ Jesus:” for, although women were not exactly without a name or a place in the Jewish Church, they had not equal privileges with men. They were not, indeed, “outer court” worshippers at the Temple. Their place in the sacred area was both higher and nearer to the symbols of the Divine Presence in the Sanctuary, than “the court of the Gentiles:” still, it was “fifteen steps lower than the inner court,” where the temple and the altar stood, and where all the males appeared before God in Zion. Thus, although they were not kept so “far off” as the Gentiles, from the sight and hearing of public worship, they were not permitted literally to draw “so nigh unto God” as their fathers, husbands, or even their brothers did. Indeed, in the time of Christ, they were treated at the Temple very much as Jewish women are now in the Synagogue: placed where they could hardly see or be seen.

This arbitrary and degrading arrangement was not, however, of Divine appointment. This invidious distinction did not exist in the time of Solomon, nor even so early as the reign of Manasseh. Then there were only two courts: “the court of the priest,” and “the great court.” The place called “the court of the women,” in the second Temple of Jerusalem, was no more “according to the pattern shown on the mount,” than are the latticed

galleries of the Synagogue of London. Judaism as God gave it to Moses, did not, indeed, place women altogether upon an equality with men, even “in things appertaining to God;” but still, it did not degrade them exactly, deeply as it subordinated them.

It was in reference, therefore, to a twofold subordination of the sex, that the Saviour had to take effectual measures for making male and female “all one in Himself.” He had to do something for women, which should at once emancipate them from human impositions, and equalize them in Divine privileges. And what so effectual for this twofold purpose, as showing “Himself alive after His Passion,” to women first? He thus made the Marys apostles, even to the Apostles themselves! After this crowning distinction, what Minister or Church of Christ, could doubt whether “daughters of the Lord God Almighty,” were not joint-heirs with His sons, in all the spiritual heritage of Christianity?—Thus the Saviour’s treatment of the Marys had a reason beyond themselves. He treated them as the representatives of their sex: none of whom appear to have been amongst his public enemies either during his life or at his crucifixion. This is a *remarkable* fact. Even Pilate’s wife warned her husband on the judgment-seat, to have nothing to do against “that just person,” as she called Christ. In like manner, the multitude of women who followed the Saviour from the city to Calvary, instead of joining with the men in the cry of “Crucify him,” “bewailed and lamented him.” Indeed, there is no instance of any female offering any public indignity to Christ, whilst he was upon earth. What the private feelings of the Mothers and Daughters of Jerusalem were towards Him, I do not know, of course: but, judging from the kind notice He took of their kindly sympathy, when he was led forth amidst the clamor and execrations of the Jews to be crucified, I am certainly inclined to regard his conduct to the Marys, as an acknowledgment of that sympathy, and thus as a token of special good-will to their sex, as well as to themselves. Luke xxiii. 27, 31. It was also emphatically “good-will to man!” But for this signal honor, women would have been kept down both in the church and society; and that subordination would have weakened the Church, and hindered the progress of all the best charms and charities of social life.

He is but a superficial observer, who sees in the superior education of females now, or in the advanced civilization of men, enough to account for the high and hallowed influence of Christian wives, mothers, and daughters, upon the morals and religion of the age. Both these causes of improvement are themselves the *effect* of Christ’s bringing male and female equally nigh unto God by the blood of the cross, and of making them all one in himself: and the proof—the demonstration—the seal of this, was given in His appearing to women first. His “ALL HAIL,” to the Marys, began and led to all the holy consideration in which the sex are now held, and all the holy influence which they now exercise. The impulse which originated both was given in

the Arimathean garden. That garden was the Eden in which woman was made again a spiritual "helpmeet" for man: the Paradise in which the Adams and Eves of the new creation were made "heirs together" of the grace of Eternal Life. Yes—out of this fact, however much overlooked or forgotten now, arose all the spiritual fellowship, and united co-operation for good, which has either blessed or beautified the world and the Church since.

Men, Fathers, and Brethren!—ye would not have raised "the daughters of the Lord God Almighty to sit together with you in heavenly places with Christ Jesus," had not Christ Jesus himself handed them up and placed them at your very side in all the ordinances and immunities of the Church. Ye are not, indeed, displeased with this equality, now that it is established. Ye would not alter nor disturb it now, on any account. Ye are even delighted with it. Ye would not, however, have felt thus, nor would this equality have taken place, had not Christ, by his first act, when he rose from the dead, given a deathless distinction to women. The husbands and fathers of that age had not all the honorable feelings of this age. They were not without "natural affection;" but their religious prejudices checked its current. Even when conjugal and parental love was tenderest, it did not admit the idea of spiritual equality in the Church on earth, nor the sweet hope of perfect equality in heaven. It was Christianity that introduced the present habit of thinking and feeling; and it was the example of Christ, ratified by the first "All hail" of the Resurrection, that gave effect to the claims which Christianity advanced on behalf of women.

All this may seem only a curious speculation to some men; but to this all men owe whatever was influential in the piety of their mothers. Yes, young man! your mother could not have had all her sweet influence over you, even in early life, had she not held, in public opinion, as near and dear a place to the heart of God and the Lamb, as your father did, if he also was pious. It was her equality in the kingdom of God in both worlds, that made her maternal love as powerful as paternal law.—Thus had she stood lower than her husband on the scale of spiritual and eternal privileges, you would not have risen very high on the scale of moral superiority, nor sunk so seldom as you have done.

O, what does not the Church of Christ owe to pious Mothers! When I consider how little the generality of even godly fathers do, in order to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I cannot but see that the breast of the Saviour was first full, and first warm, after death, with the mighty—the gracious—the wise purpose of creating for mothers paramount motives, and opportunities, and influences for making the lambs of their family the sheep of His fold. He foresaw how much would depend on maternal influence, and how much fathers would both leave to it, and throw upon it; and, therefore, His first act when he rose from the dead, as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, was to put honor upon his female disci-

ples. Mothers! you are sure now that it is no strain of compliment to the sex, which has run through this chapter. You see now that I have not been expanding an incident into a system. I have, indeed, brought forward your rights and privileges from a point in the history of Christ, at which they are not usually exhibited or pleaded: but I have done this because it is the true point, and the public act towards women, by which He gave triumphant effect in the Church to all the claims of his female disciples. Whilst, therefore, I congratulate you upon your equal, and equally well chartered, privileges in the Christian Church on earth and in heaven, I remind you that you are thus blessed, that ye may be blessings; that your responsibility is equal to your high calling in Christ Jesus, and to your joint-heirship in his kingdom and glory.

I have not forgotten, whilst explaining the grand general reason of the honor conferred on the Marys, that their own character and spirit furnish explanations of the preference thus shown to them. The well known fact, that they were the last at the Cross, and the first at the Sepulchre, ought never to be forgotten. It is not, however, the only fact which seems to have influenced the Saviour's conduct towards them. They had both sat at his feet, and followed him in the regeneration of life, long and often, before his passion began. From the time they were called by his grace, until all his temporal wants ceased, they had "ministered unto him of their substance," and been his prompt and willing servants. During his ministry, they were at once his aptest scholars, and his firmest adherents. In a word, we never hear of them taking any offence at his doctrine, or giving way to either the fiery or ambitious spirit which, occasionally, betrayed the Apostles. This uniform fidelity and consistency were not likely to be overlooked by the Saviour, when he rose from the dead. He who accepted, and even rewarded openly, the dying testimony which the penitent thief bore to His innocence, was sure to honor those holy women, who had so long and so closely identified themselves with His cause and character. And he did. Whilst He only returned sympathy for sympathy to the "daughters of Jerusalem," who only began to weep when His woes began, he manifested himself to the Marys in the garden, the moment he parted from the angels in the Sepulchre. They were the first admitted to worship at His feet, and enjoy his presence, after the Angels had finished their homage and services.

Is there no practical lesson taught by this historical fact? Does it illustrate no experimental fact? ORIGEN says "God hates the man who thinks that any of his holidays lasts but one day." He means, that the man who thinks of the Crucifixion only on Good Friday, or of the Resurrection only on Eastersunday, can neither please God, nor profit himself, by his devotions. You readily admit this to be true. Well, it is equally true, that they have not much of the presence of Christ in public ordinances, and are never sure of enjoyment even at the Sacra-



ment, who try not to walk with God during the week, as well as to wait on Him upon the Sabbath. Whenever there is heartless prayer in the closet from day to day, there will be no heart-felt praise in the sanctuary; because no such communications of grace, nor any such hold of the Cross, as will tune the heart to the joy of penitential grief, or to the joy of a good hope of Salvation. Only Marys who follow Christ through the week, are sure to meet with Christ on the Sabbath. His salutation, "All Hail," is now awarded most frequently to those who serve him most faithfully.

It is also in fine and full harmony with all just views of both Christ and Religion, to reckon that He was much influenced in his treatment of the Marys, by their sacred regard to the sanctity of the Sabbath, and by their rising so early to visit his sepulchre. During His life, he had set them an example both of keeping "The holy of the Lord honorable," and of early rising. It was "His custom" to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and to go "early in the morning" to the temple.—This the Marys knew, and imitated. Not all their sorrow or desolation, arising from His death and burial, was allowed by them to set aside their Sabbatic duties. They returned from His grave, "and rested on the Sabbath day, according to the commandment." That commandment made no provision nor gave any warrant, for finishing the funeral obsequies even of Christ, although he was "the Lord of the Sabbath:" and the Marys did not venture to take a liberty which the law did not allow. This was not Jewish strictness. They only did right. Nothing but works of necessity or of mercy are lawful on the Sabbath day: and the completion of the Saviour's funeral was neither. It was no work of necessity: for even if his sacred body could have "seen corruption," there was more than enough of embalming spices around it to prevent all danger. It was not a work of mercy: for that body could no longer suffer, and was exposed to no insult.

How this example should influence your Sabbatic habits and spirit! For, if the Marys would not finish the rites of Sepulture on the day of holy rest, even in the case of the Saviour, what likeness to them do those women bear, who can finish a *dress*, or pay a *visit*, or take a *jaunt* of pleasure, on that sacred day?

## No. VII.

### PARTIALITIES IN HOLINESS.

"I HAVE heard and read a great deal (said one) about the nature and necessity of evangelical holiness, and about the only way of acquiring it; but, except in my Bible, I have met with nothing expressly on 'THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.' There, however, almost as much is said about its beauty and loveliness, as upon its necessity. Holiness is as much commended as it is enforced, in the Word of God; and invariably represented, as being equally

desirable and essential. Now, although I certainly do not see clearly what could be said on the beauty of holiness, that would help me to follow holiness more fully and willingly, I do both see and feel, that something more than even a deep sense of its *necessity*, is requisite in order to this. I find that it is only in as far as I really love or admire true holiness, that I follow it cheerfully. A sense of duty, or an apprehension of danger, leads me certainly, farther in well-doing, than love would always carry me: but still, I do those things most and best, which I love as well as revere. Alas, I do nothing as it ought to be done! There is, however, a *better* and a *worse* in my obedience; and the best parts of it are those duties which commend themselves to my heart by their loveliness, as well as to my conscience by their authority. I want, therefore, to see all duty in this light; that I may choose it for its own sake, as well as submit to it because it cannot be safely neglected."

Perhaps, you have thought and felt thus, when observing how much more pleasure you take in some duties than in others. You must have noticed, at times, the very great difference there is between the spirit in which you discharge the duties you really love, and the spirit in which you yield to those you are only afraid to neglect. In general you are "*glad*" when it is said to you, "let us go up to the house of the Lord;" but not always glad when both Conscience and the Holy Spirit join in saying, "enter thy closet, and shut thy door and pray to the Father who seeth in secret." Even the assurance, "He shall reward thee openly," does not always charm you into your closet, even when you cannot exactly plead the want of time to go. In like manner, you can in general say from the heart, "How *amiable* are thy Tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts." The house of God presents itself often to your mind, in the course of the week, as the very gate of Heaven. Its oracles and ordinances, its worship and fellowship, with their sweet influences and holy associations, rise up before you in the world, as they did before David in the wilderness, in a vision so bright and lovely, that you feel something of his holy impatience to "appear before God in Zion." Thus you do not say nor think of the Sabbath,—"*What a weariness it is! when will it be over?*" You do not, in general, feel like Doeg in the temple, "detained before the Lord." But not so often in this fine spirit, do you anticipate or improve your return to the closet and the family altar. And yet, you love them more and better than some other duties. They also present themselves frequently, as gates of Heaven too. On a bright morning, when the sun fills the house, as with the glory of the old Shechinah, how exhilarating it is to bow around the family altar, offering "the morning sacrifice?" And on a stormy night, or when wearisome nights are before us, how soothing it is to join in "the evening sacrifice;" casting all our care upon Him who careth for us? And not less exhilarating to our spirit, is the closet of secret prayer, when our thirst for communion with God is ardent; nor less soothing, when our cares

and fears are oppressive. Thus there is attraction, as well as obligation, in the duty of prayer. If the law of devotion drive us occasionally to both the domestic and the solitary altar, the cords of love, or the magnets of conscious want and weakness, draw us habitually. We need law: but we see beauty, and taste happiness, and sometimes lose the sense of duty in the sensations of delight, whilst drawing nigh unto God. Nothing, perhaps, is more gratifying to us, than the prevalence of a truly devotional spirit in the sanctuary and the closet. We welcome it as a token for good, and reckon it an unequivocal mark of grace. Whilst we delight in prayer, we cease to doubt the genuineness of our faith, and are not tempted to question the reality of our conversion.

Now all this is as it should be. We cannot attach too much importance to a devotional spirit, nor be too watchful to preserve it: for when this evidence of personal piety declines, every other passes under an eclipse, which so darkens them all, that we are unable or afraid to trace our connection with the Sun of Righteousness. We actually lose His light, when we lose our relish for prayer. That relish is, however, more frequently lost or impaired by not cultivating an equal relish for some other duties, than by the indulgence of sloth or formality. We are oftener thrown out of the spirit of prayer, by giving way to wrong tempers, than by growing weary of regular habits. Fits of ill-humor, whether fiery or sulky, keep us out of the closet whilst they last, and make us afraid to enter it even when they are over. Hence the necessity of attaching almost as much importance to "a meek and quiet spirit," as to a devotional spirit. The former, as well as the latter, is an "ornament of great price in the sight of God;" and ought, therefore, to be equally lovely in our estimation. But, how few see so much moral beauty in self-control, or in a meek spirit, as in a devotional spirit! And yet, we all know well, that devotion is neither heavenly nor pleasing when we are angry or peevish. Were it, therefore, only for the sake of serenity and holy freedom in the closet, we ought to study the beauty of a holy temper so closely, that we could no more leave our humors, than our habits, to accident; and no more risk the consequences of an unruly or hasty spirit, than of a defiled conscience. Indeed, for every purpose, whether practical or devotional, we ought to regard good temper as being as truly a mark of grace, as good habits, or gracious feelings. It is, in all its forms, "the fruit of the Spirit." Accordingly, "love, joy, peace, and faith," in the scriptural enumeration of the special fruits of the Holy Spirit. And, what is equally to the point, their opposites, "wrath, strife, and variance," in common with heresy, are classed with the worst works of the flesh. Gal. v. 19, 23. Were this duly remembered, we should feel, in ruling our tongue and temper well, that we were as directly proving our faith in Christ, and evincing our participation of the Holy Spirit, as when we mounted on eagles'

wings in devotion, or melted in love and penitence at the Sacrament. Yes; and we should both soar and sing oftener, if we habitually tried to possess our souls in patience and equanimity.

But even this is not the duty, which has "no comeliness" that commends it to our taste. The worst tempered do not admire passion even in themselves, however they may justify or palliate it at times. They often excuse it, but they never praise it, nor pretend that it makes them happy. Perhaps no Christians see so clearly, in one sense, the deformity of ill-temper, as those who are, themselves, very irritable. They smart and suffer so much from giving way to it frequently, that they know well all its sad effects, however they may forget its sinfulness, or try to soften its guilt, in their own case. Neither are they insensible to the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit in others. They even wish they were like them; and, if wishing could make them so, they would be very glad! Of course, it never will: for in speaking thus, they are wishing for what no one has or can get in this world,—a spirit that should need neither ruling nor watching over. Grace to rule and watch over their own rebellious spirit, they might obtain by turning their idle wishes into honest prayers: but even prayer itself, however fervent, will not bring down from heaven into any bosom, a spirit which nothing could ruffle, or which would require no looking after.—There is no such temper in the universe, except in heaven. Let us not, therefore, amuse ourselves by dreaming about a lovely fiction, nor deceive ourselves by imagining that those who have an "excellent spirit," are so *gifted* with it, as to need no self-government nor pains-taking, in order to excel. Those who excel us most in temper, will all be found to exceed us equally in watchfulness.

I do not forget, whilst writing thus, that many are good-humored, and even sweet-tempered, who yet have no grace whatever, nor any concern about it. In such cases, therefore, I readily allow, and solemnly affirm, that the sweetness of their disposition proves nothing but the healthiness of their nervous system, or the harmony of their physical powers, or the absence of provocation. In such females, therefore, habitual gentleness and suavity do not amount even to moral principle, and are in no sense the fruits of the Spirit. The utmost and the best which can be said of this happy temperament, is, that it is an invaluable gift of Providence, very favorable to all the duties of life and godliness, and very useful to society. It ought, therefore, to be highly prized by all who possess it: for it is unquestionably given by Providence, as a motive to seek grace; and thus it involves weighty responsibilities, and leaves its possessors without excuse, if they neglect the great salvation.

Much more responsible and inexcusable, however, are we who have found some grace, and hope for still more, if we neglect our temper, or leave it to accident. For if nature, when unusually gentle, bind to improvement, how much grace confirms that obligation! If they sin who spoil a fine natural dis-



position by exposing it unnecessarily to temptation, how guilty are we when we allow grace to be defeated by nature, just because we did not try to rule our spirit at the time!

It will not do to set off against this neglect, the attention we pay to the great salvation itself, and to some of the spiritual duties which love to Christ involves. Indeed, the more attention we pay to them, the more inexcusable we are when we give way to a wrong spirit. Besides, we do not attend to them, whilst the fit of ill-humor lasts. That which clouds our brow or convulses our frame, hides both Divine and eternal things from our sight, for the time; and renders it difficult, even afterwards, to renew clear and calm views of them again. Thus, what is really spiritual about us, is any thing but a set-off against what is natural. "The image of the heavenly," instead of excusing or palliating "the image of the earthy," only aggravates its inconsistency, whenever that inconsistency is allowed, or not singled out for crucifixion.

Nothing is farther from the real design of these hints, than to set an amiable spirit *above* a devotional spirit. My object is, to show clearly how they help each other, and how much they depend on each other; that thus we may be equally careful to cultivate both. They are emphatically, the wings on which the soul rises to heaven; and if either wing is allowed to drop often, the other will not bear the soul far nor frequently within the veil. Hence the necessity of making Christian temper a matter of deliberate study. And I mean by studying it, not merely trying to rule your spirit better than you have done, nor even being more upon your guard than formerly; but also contemplating its own native loveliness, and its "great price" in the sight of God and man, as an "ornament" of female character. It must be loved, in order to be habitually attempted. But loved it will not be, until its own loveliness is seen and felt. We must be charmed by the beauty of this feature of the Divine Image, as well as charge ourselves by its authority or its necessity, if we would really abound in it.

This is equally true in regard to a forbearing and forgiving spirit. The duty of long-suffering under injury, and the still harder duty of both forgiving and forgetting the injury, may stand very clearly before the mind, and even have much weight upon the conscience. We may neither despise nor dispute our obligation, to bury in oblivion whatever we have suffered from the hand or tongue of others: and yet, all our heart may rise and writhe against the duty of telling, or showing, the offenders, that we do forgive and forget. Indeed, we are inclined to think it quite enough, if God knows that we are trying to do it in his sight. Nothing, perhaps, is more mortifying than the idea of making known to the offender, face to face, that we have got over the offence: except, indeed, the idea of confessing our own faults to those whom we have offended. Both duties are sadly against the grain of human nature, even where grace has no small influence upon the heart. Accordingly, neither duty is, in general,

well gone through, even by those who cannot be easy before God until their breaches with man are openly healed.

Here, again, the failure in this part of holiness, arises from not studying the beauty of a right spirit. We look at both confessing and forgiving, too much in the lights of this world, or through the eyes of others; and thus come to deem that mean-spirited or very weak, which God reckons signally noble and peculiarly lovely. Whilst, therefore, a deeper sense of positive and imperative obligation to confess and forgive, is of immense importance; still, that alone, will not lead to much of either until both are admired for their beauty, as well as admitted because of their authority. We must learn to love these duties because they are lovely in the sight of God; and for the sake of the good they create and the mischief they prevent, as well as for the sake of the laws which enforce them: for, otherwise, we shall shrink from them entirely, or perform them grudgingly.

I have now said quite enough to convince you, that more than regard to the law of holiness, or than the dread of the penal sanctions which enforce it, is necessary, in order to a cheerful and impartial following of holiness. We must be drawn by its silken cords, as well as driven by its knotted whip: for, otherwise, we shall not go far enough, to make our calling and election sure; nor readily enough to prove that "the love of Christ constraineth us."

The grand question here, however, is, how are such winning views of the beauty of Holiness to be acquired, without a degree of study greater than we have time for, and deeper than our talents can reach? Now, happily, the Ethics of Holiness are both few and simple. Its chief reasons are founded upon what God is, upon what Christ has done for us, and upon what is obviously wanted as preparation for the enjoyments and engagements of Heaven.

Did you ever observe how the first of these reasons (which is the most profound) is brought before us in the Scriptures? "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 15. Thus *calling* Grace introduces *commanding* Holiness. God appeals to what he has done for us, before telling us all we must be. What is "written" to us on the subject of holiness, is founded upon what is "wrought" in us by the Holy Spirit. God reminds us that he has called us by his grace, when he invites us to contemplate and copy his holiness. Thus He interests our hearts, that he may exercise our understanding, and sway our conscience, by the glories of his own character. Truly God is love, in the very manner in which he gives law to his children!

Now we fondly hope that what we have felt of the power and sweetness of the Gospel, is, the gracious "calling" of God. We may be somewhat afraid to say that it is, positively, that effectual calling of God, which is, "without repentance" on his part: but we are very anxious that it may prove to be so, and quite sure that it has been effectual for

some good purposes upon both our hearts and habits already. We may not see so clearly the precise time of our call, as to be able, like Paul, to point to the very moment of our conversion, saying "When it pleased God to call me by his grace:" but we do remember the time, when we disliked godliness, and felt no need of grace. We are very glad that

"These times are past!"

and would not for worlds they should return!

Well—the holiness of God did not prevent Him from calling us by his Spirit, even whilst we were "dead in trespasses and sins." In fact, it was because He is glorious in holiness, that the love wherewith he loved us when he quickened us, was so "rich in mercy:" for had he not loved Holiness infinitely, he would never have taken one step, nor made one stoop, to make us holy. We need not be afraid, therefore, to study how holy the God who called us, is. Had he been less holy, he would not have called us nor any one. Well, therefore, may the harp of Judah be listened to and obeyed, when it invites us to "give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness:" for were not God infinitely and immutably holy, there would be no grace to give thanks for.

I mention this particularly, because it is too common to speak and think only of the love or the mercy of God, when gratitude for grace is claimed from us. All grace, however, is given for holy purposes; and, therefore, it ought to lead out our thoughts to the Divine Holiness which is the moral reason of this, as well as to the Divine Love which is the original fountain of grace. The character, as well as the heart, of God, must be kept in view. We have no more right to look at the latter, apart from the former, for comfort, than the twelve tribes of Israel had to look only upon the breastplate of Aaron for their names, when he interceded before the Lord. Their names were also upon the *beryl-stones*, on his shoulders. Thus they were placed upon the seat of authority, as well as upon the seat of sympathy; and borne where government rested, as well as where grace reigned. It is in allusion to this, that it is said of Christ, "The government shall be upon his shoulders."

There is, therefore, something wrong in our views, if we are afraid to think of the holiness of God: and if we dislike to think of it, there is much wrong in our hearts. Our dislike will not move, however, until our dread it removed. So long as the holiness of God presents any thing to terrify us; or is regarded as an attribute which is against us; or as an awful perfection which would turn from us with abhorrence, were it not prevented by Love and Mercy; so long we shall not love it. We cannot love the Holiness of God, whilst we reckon it our enemy, or regard it as no farther our friend, than just as far as the intercession of Christ keeps it from breaking out upon us in fury.

This, alas! is, however, the ordinary view of it. In this light the generality contemplate it: and,

therefore, dislike the subject. It seems to them to have no "beauty" that they should desire it. Do you feel at all in this way? Does the holiness of God appear to you an attribute flashing rather with devouring fire, than with soft splendor? Do you look to it only from necessity; and never from choice, except when you feel your need of a strong check upon yourself? Were you never so charmed by the beauty of Jehovah's holiness, as to "give thanks at the remembrance" of it? Can you hardly imagine how you could ever so get over your instinctive dread of it, as to delight in thinking of it, or to be capable of contemplating it with composure? Does it seem to you impossible to be as much charmed with the holiness of God, as you have been with his love and mercy?

I multiply these questions, and magnify their importance, just to throw your thoughts fully off from vulgar opinion, and fairly forth upon the revealed character of God in Christ. "In the face of Jesus," the brightness of the glory of the Divine holiness, shines as mildly as the softest radiance of any perfection you admire.

In order to be convinced of this, you have only to ask yourself the single question—"Were God *unholy*, what security would remain for the continuance of any of his lovely perfections?" Do you not see at a glance, that His holiness preserves them all? It is the *vital* principle of the Divine character. Because it lives—Love, mercy, grace, truth, and wisdom "live also."

But I have gone so fully into this subject, in my little work on "MANLY PIETY," that I must leave you to follow out the hint for yourself; for, in fact, I have exhausted all my definite ideas already.

## NO. VIII.

### CHRISTIANS HOLY TEMPLES.

"REMEMBER your rank, my lord, and respect it," said a venerable friend of mine, (apart,) to a young nobleman, who had so far forgotten all that he owed to his "order," as to descend to vulgar manners and language in the mail. The deserved reproof had the desired effect: the young man resumed all the proverbial urbanity and politeness of his high station.

This is one of the beneficial influences of hereditary and official rank: it imposes propriety on power. It does not always prevent vice; but it preserves decorum, and enforces the semblance of virtue, in the intercourse of society. When nobility, however, is enshrined with noble recollections of patriotic ancestry which hallow it more than age, or wealth, or heraldry, more is expected from it than decorum or courtesy. The descendants of the champions and martyrs of both civil and religious Liberty, are expected to breathe the spirit, as well as wear the mantle, of the patriots who immortalized their name. A Russell, Sidney, or Hampden, without public spirit; or a Wickliffe, Ridley, Cranmer, Baxter, or Owen, without Protestant spirit.



would be an anomaly, equally unnatural and repulsive to the public mind: for whilst "England expects every man to do his duty," to her sacred liberties, she *calculates* upon sacrifices, as well as duty, from the lineal representatives of "the mighty dead," who claimed with their voice, or sealed with their blood, the charter of her independence. Such associations are not, however, the only sources of honorable and inspiring feeling, which tells well upon the interests of society at large. Nothing has softened or purified the intercourse of social life, more than the *self-respect* of females. By respecting themselves, for the sake of their sex, they have won respect and homage. Their moral influence has kept pace with their moral tastes and intellectual character, and made itself felt like the fragrance, in all directions; and felt most when, like fragrance-flowers, they seem unconscious of their own sweetness. They have thus created "a law unto themselves," which promulgates itself without a trumpet, and explains itself without words, and prolongs its own authority by their silence. A look defines it even to the dull; and a blush defends it, like lightning, from the designing. A woman has only to respect herself as a woman, in order to be respected.

You feel, accordingly, that you owe much to your sex, on its own account. You see at a glance, both what is worthy and what is unworthy of it. You do not, and cannot, forget what is expected from you on the single ground of your sex. You are not sorry that so much is expected. You are even gratified and glad, that "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," are calculated upon, as almost matters of course in your character. You can hardly regret that, when woman falls, she

"Falls like Lucifer, to rise no more,"

in this world. The feeling in the public mind, that women, like Angels, must stand or fall for ever, is, indeed, a high one; but it is highly honorable to you, and unspeakably beneficial to society. It may expect and exact too much from you: but it enables you to do more and better, and both more easily, than if the standard of female excellence were lower.

Why not, then, respect your piety as much as your sex? If there be any thing inspiring and responsible in the consideration,—*"I am a woman, and one of Britain's daughters;"* how much more in the consideration,—*"I am a Christian, and one of the daughters of the Lord God Almighty!"* The latter relationship is, I am fully aware, not so easily realized or claimed as the former; the former is your birth-right, which nothing but crime can forfeit. The latter is an adoption, which no virtue can merit. It is not, however, on that account less obtainable, nor less free, nor less ascertainable; for "to as many as receive Him—even to them that believe on His name"—Christ gives "power," (that is warrant and welcome,) to regard themselves as

the children of God. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God," they are the children of God.

These are neither equivocal nor discouraging tests of adoption. They prove *your* adoption into the redeemed family of God, if you honestly welcome Christ as your only hope of salvation, and honestly desire to be led by the Spirit into all truth and duty. And, do you not? If you really did not, why are you so deeply interested in this subject?—Why, else, are you so anxious to be a child of God? How came the question of your adoption to lay such hold upon your mind and heart? "Who opened thine eyes" to see the need and nature of "being born again," in order to becoming one of God's spiritual family? This persuasion cometh not from instinct, age, example, or education. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He has "quickened," "illuminated," and "led," wherever the Spirit of adoption is thus prized, and prayed for, and longed after. The heart is *magnetized* by grace, that turns to this holy pole.

The question of your adoption is, however, one which ought not, and never can be well settled, by your own consciousness of certain feelings or desires on the subject. It is a practical, as much as an experimental question. It turns quite as much upon what you are trying to be and do, as upon what you wish to feel and enjoy. If, therefore, in addition to your solicitude to be a child of God, you are trying to copy the likeness, and to cultivate the spirit, of His regenerated family, the question is settled: "ye are no more strangers or foreigners;" but members of the "household of God:" "ye were sometimes darkness; but ye are now light in the Lord: walk as children of the light."

Amongst the many forms of Scriptural appeal to those who are thus solicitous to ascertain their adoption, the most frequent, if not the most forcible is, "What—know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the Living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—Wherefore come out from among them," (the ungodly,) "and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty; and touch not the unclean thing." 2 Cor. vi. 16.

I wish to fix your attention upon this view of yourself as a Temple. It is a fascinating, as well as a solemn, view of your state and responsibility. It is a view more easily taken and retained than some others: for, although drawn from the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, and thus associated with many sublime peculiarities, to which parallels would be difficult either to find or fancy, it is still a simple view of a Christian. For, after all that can be said or imagined of the Holy Temple, it was but a house made with hands, and of earthly materials; and thus less likely to be made "a habitation of God, through the Spirit," than the human frame.—Solomon felt this, even when the first temple was

in all the fulness and freshness of its architectural glory. "Will God," said he, "in very deed dwell with *man* upon the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee! How much less this House which I have built!" In this exclamation of Solomon, the inferiority of the temple to man, as well as to heaven, is both implied and expressed. Or, if Solomon did not intend to say this, "a greater than Solomon" has said it again and again. "Thus saith the high and lofty ONE that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit." Isa. lvii. 15. "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? But to this man will I look, —even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

This settles the inferiority of all temples to both the human soul and body. They form a "living temple," and may be a "holy temple" in a higher sense than even the heaven of heavens itself.

Let us not be misled by words, nor bewildered with splendid appearances. Even your bodies are more "fearfully and wonderfully made," than the material heavens which form the actual temple and throne of Deity: and your spirits, both in their essence and immortality, are nobler than the fine ether which is the firmament of glory. We think too meanly of both our soul and body, when we imagine that any thing material, in heaven or on earth, is equal to them. We cannot, indeed, think too meanly of their moral tastes and tendencies by nature. We may well say of the body, that it is vile as well as frail; and of the soul, that it is depraved as well as weak: but neither is worthless. Worthless! no, no; Emmanuel counted them more valuable than fallen angels: for he took not upon him the nature of angels. He made His own soul an offering for our souls, and he will make our bodies "like unto His own glorious body." The Temple, even when filled with the glory of God, was but an emblem of what every man and woman should be, and of what any one may be;—"an habitation of God through the Spirit." It was to exemplify and secure this, that Christ became at once the temple, the priest, and the sacrifice of God. In our nature, He showed what human nature should be, and might be. As sustained by Him, Humanity was (and he called it so) a Temple, in which dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Such a Temple was the Saviour; and such temples, in their measure, may we be: "filled with all the (communicable) fulness of God."

It is not to our credit, if we deem this a sublime speculation, rather than a sober reality. Paul did not view it in this light, either for himself or others. He bowed his knees in frequent and fervent prayer for the Ephesians, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, by being enabled to comprehend, with all saints, the wonders of the love of Christ.—

Eph. iii. 14, 21. What "holy temples unto the Lord," the Apostle desired and expected Believers to become! "Christ," says he may dwell in you hearts by faith. "Christ is in you, the hope of glory." "Know ye not yourselves, how that Christ is in you?"

It will not do to overlook this often repeated and pressed consideration. It occurs too frequently and emphatically to be trifled with, or evaded. "Christ is in you," says Paul, "except ye be reprobates."—This gives awful solemnity to the question. "Am I a living Temple, and trying to be a holy Temple, unto the Lord?" For, although the word "reprobate" has none of the meaning of the word "Reprobation," as that term was used in the olden times of the Calvinistic controversy, still it means so much that is awful and ominous, that we do well to lay deeply to heart Paul's admonition; "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves: know ye not yourselves, how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates," or without any real marks of grace?

Christ himself throws us as fully upon the same question, by his own representations of the TEMPLESHIP of his disciples. "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be one in us," is the grand point in which his prayers for their sanctification meet and terminate. John xvii. 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him." John xiv. 23. "The world knoweth not the Spirit of Truth, because it seeth him not; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John xiv. 17.

When such passages are thus multiplied, they do not (be it recollected) mean more as a whole, than is meant by any one of them. The design of so many, is not to convey such an idea of the work or witness of the Holy Spirit, as must intimidate or perplex us. No, indeed: their design is just the very opposite. We, indeed, are very ready when such an array of texts is before us, to take alarm; or to conclude from them, that nothing we have experienced, and nothing we are ever likely to possess, can amount to "the first fruits of the Spirit" even. Multiplied statements on this subject, seem to magnify it beyond all ordinary piety. This is, however, quite a mistake. The very fear, suspense, and solicitude, which you now feel, lest this view of piety should disprove your piety, prove that you are not a stranger to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Your heart would neither feel the worth, nor fear the want of His gracious influences, if it had never experienced any of them. We both have the Spirit, and are in some measure "after the Spirit," if we seriously "mind the things of the Spirit." We are the temples of the Holy Ghost, if we honestly desire and try to be holy temples unto the Lord.

Is this your aim? If so, there is nothing in all the hosts of texts which you have just reviewed, to discourage you. The grand object of each and all of them, is to penetrate your whole spirit with the living conviction, that you are one of God's conse-



craved temples; and thus must take care, that you neither "defile" nor discredit the temple of God. Now, you do take some care, that you may not disgrace the profession you make; that you may not bring any reproach upon religion; that your life may not give the lie to your creed or your hopes. Well; why not connect all this holy fear, and care, and watchfulness, with the consideration that you are "the temple of God?" You connect them (and very properly) with your name, and your place in the Church of God; with your fond hope that you have found, or shall find, mercy of the Lord; with your good name in your family, and among your friends. All this is as it should be. I would not detach your sense of responsibility, nor your regard to consistency, from any one of these checks and charms upon character. It would, however, strengthen and prolong the influence of them all, to recognize as fully, and realize as constantly, your templeship, as a Christian. That means no more than is meant by your profession, your obligations, or your responsibility: but it defines them clearly, and commends as well as enforces them powerfully. You ought, therefore, to be willing, yea, thankful and glad, to avail yourself of any new consideration that adds to the power of the old motives which regulate your conduct; especially, when, as in this instance, the *new* motive is as scriptural as the old ones.

But, why do I call it new? The idea of Templeship, is as old, and as often repeated in Scripture, as the idea of discipleship, sonship, or citizenship. You have just seen that the New Testament is full of it. It does not, however, occur often in religious conversation now. It does not seem to have the same place or power in the mind of Christians, that the other ideas possess. But, why should it not be as familiar and influential as any of them? It is not inferior to them in beauty or point; and not so superior to them in sublimity, as to be difficult to

comprehend, remember, or apply. "I am a living temple of God, and ought to be a holy temple," is as soon and as easily said, as, "I am a professor of religion, and ought to be consistent."

But I must not argue with you, as if it were optional to you, to admit or decline the use of this holy consideration. You are not at liberty to overlook it for another day, even if you have done pretty well without thinking of it hitherto. It is, most likely, the very motive which you now want, in order to keep up the influence of your old motives, in following holiness. For, have they all their original power over you? Does your sense of responsibility as a convert, as a disciple, as a possessor of grace, carry you all the length it did, when you first took "the vows of God" upon you? If not—you may backslide until you break down altogether on the narrow way, unless you get hold, at this critical nick of time, upon the rallying and inspiring consideration of your templeship.

I know that the word itself is new: but you know that the idea is as old as your Bible. I have not coined the word for the sake of novelty, or of singularity; but in order to arrest attention to "the mind of Christ," as that is expressed in the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." I tell you again, therefore, that it is neither wise nor safe to exclude this scriptural view of your obligation to be holy, or to try to do without it any longer. If you are a real Christian, Christianity considers and calls you, the temple of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit; and remonstrates with you, as well as commands you, to consider yourself in this light. And mark; you cannot point to, nor conceive of, any appeal to your principles, or hopes, or responsibilities, as a Christian woman, so striking in its form and stirring in its spirit as this one. Look at it again. "What; know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" "Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

T. J. J. AND.

## ST. JOHN.—A. D. 96.

(The following Sketch of St. John is selected from R. W. Evans's Scripture Biography.)

It is a striking feature in our blessed Lord's selection of his apostles, that he called two fellowships of brothers, Andrew and Peter, James and John: it expresses a lovely trait of character both in caller and in called. In these it shows how community of blood had grown into community of mind, so that where one went, the other was prepared to go too, even to those unknown realms of spirit to which Jesus called them.

Of these two pairs of brothers, the most remarkable are Peter of the one, and John of the other. They are the most distinguished members of the whole apostolical college, and their characters stand out in strong contrast to each other. Each most dearly loved his Master, and yet with quite a different kind of love. Peter's was that which would prompt him gladly to die for him; which would not

let a hand come near to harm him if he could help it; he would stand in front of him as a shield, and turn himself to every motion of the assailant. But John's was that which bade him seek to die with him, his joy lay in his company. Whatever affliction may chance to be in it, there was nothing but certain and insupportable sorrow without it. He clung to his Master's side, and partook with him of every turn and motion; he would follow him whithersoever he went. Peter's was a soldier's love to his leader, but John's was that which surpasses the love of women. Peter drew his sword to deliver his Master. John stood at the cross and took his last dying words. Peter's love would stir him promptly to obey any request. John's would bid him anticipate it. Peter's noted each outward sign and gesture. John's read the heart. Loves so different

meet with a return of a different intimacy of love. And if Peter was first in honor, John was first in affection among the apostles of Jesus. To Peter he said, "Lovest thou me? feed my sheep;" but to John he recommended his mother in his last agonies, and acknowledged him as his brother, saying to her, "Woman, behold thy son," and to him, "behold thy mother."

The first occasion on which we meet with John distinct from the rest, shows how deeply he possessed this love. Jesus, at his last meal with them, said to his apostles, that one of them should betray him. They looked on each other in much distress, doubting of whom he spake, but not daring to ask. Then Peter, unwilling to put the question himself, as perhaps presuming upon too great liberty, beckoned to John to put it; and John, reclining, as the intimate friend, with his head against his Master's bosom, put it, and obtained the answer. His love is again pre-eminently shown in being the only one who followed his Master to the end. In company with Peter he followed him to the house of the high-priest, and there witnessed his comrade's sad denial. John never could have denied him, he was wrapt up in him, and was prepared by the unconquerable patience, as well as ardor of his love, for every event. But Peter's love was more ardent than patient; he was ill-prepared to show it by passive endurance. This main quality of Christian soldiiership he had yet to learn. The minuteness of John's narrative respecting our Lord's appearance before Pilate, shows that he was present with him there too; and thus he continued faithful to the end. He never lost sight of the beloved form of his Master, until he was sealed in the tomb. Towards the close of our Lord's ministry, we often find Peter and John associated together, and commencing that peculiar companionship which they seem to have maintained until they were separated by the dispersion of the apostles among the Gentiles. They were drawn together by their Master's preference. Rivalry of merit draws pure and generous minds together in mutual admiration and esteem; it is the vulgar and ignoble which it separates in envy and dislike. But these had the only lasting bond of all love, the only tie which cannot be loosened by the chances and changes of the body, which the fire of trial cannot consume; they had the spiritual bond of their Saviour's love. In loving him they loved one another, and in loving one another they felt their love for him. They afford the example of the first Christian friendship, and show its only true source; of that friendship which is from above, and can no more suffer from what passes below, than the body of an angel sent into our world from heaven. Peter's denial, followed by sincere repentance as it was, did not loosen the bonds of this friendship. John's love towards him would grow in tenderness on this very account. Pity towards a sincere penitent, not only brings back all former affection, but softens still further its nature, and melts all that still remained obdurate in the mass. Accordingly they were again together on the joyful morning of the resurrection, and were the first of the apostles who ascertained that the tomb was emptied of its unearthly guest.

These blessed yoke-fellows of a yoke which was easy indeed, were shortly after joined together, and set apart from the rest, by our Lord's signifying to them their future fortunes. After that the manner of his death had been foretold to him, Peter, turning round and seeing John, was anxious to know what he had to say concerning his companion also. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou me," was the answer. This was

thought at the time to intimate that John should survive to the last day. It was, however, fulfilled in every sense. John alone of all the apostles lived to see the Lord come in judgment on Jerusalem. Nor was he called away to follow his Master by an untimely death; he was left to live out the course of nature. Often must they have thought of these prophecies of their Master in after life. The Holy Spirit, which came down upon them, and brought all that he said to their remembrance, with an interpretation of what had been obscure, and the converging events of life, must have given them increasing clearness. Reserved thus by the Lord, how must they have set at nought all the chances of the world; they were especially exempted from their grasp. He himself had appointed to them their course; with what joy and satisfaction would they run it. He had said, "touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," until the hour that I have appointed for them. Thus they must have felt themselves to be in his hands, with a certainty of grasp, as it were, beyond the consciousness of any of the rest.

They had ever been distinguished beyond the rest, but now this additional peculiarity, this their Master's own yoking of them to the chariot of his coming, made them mutual mates and comrades more than ever. They boldly confronted the Sanhedrim together, and shared the affliction of bonds and scourgings. The prompt ardor of Peter, and the much-enduring mildness of John, were associated in a resistance which defied all the powers of earth to overcome. But we soon lose sight in Scripture narrative of this glorious fellowship; the last occasion on which John is mentioned, is his partnership with Peter on a mission into Samaria, to lay hands and confer the Holy Ghost on the converts there. It was indeed a work in good accord with his character, one which leaves upon us its exact impression; it was a work of love and grace, such as became the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Few can have read Scripture, and entered into the characters exhibited there, without feeling sorry so soon to part with the only authentic account of John. We wish to dwell long and late on a character so lovely, on one who was loved by the Source of all love, and exhibited by a closer example than all the rest; his meekness, his mildness, his tender affection. We cannot help feeling a regret that we have no further history of him, over which we may pore, bend over his works of love, and drink in their spirit. The anecdotes preserved of him by writers of the church, are indeed more numerous than all that are recorded of his colleagues, and one is of some length and of much beauty, but bearing marks, as they do here and there, of want of authenticity, and being at all events mere tradition, we cannot cling to them with that feeling of faith, with that excitement of affection, and with that sense of instruction, with which we hang over the detail of Scripture. But our knowledge of him is not confined to the narrative part of Scripture. He is among those, who although dead, yet speak through their writings.

The Book of Revelations informs us that he was at that time in exile for the word of God, and testimony of Jesus Christ, in the Isle of Patmos. This is the only fact respecting himself, and inasmuch as the book is a prophecy put into his mouth, we can scarcely discern any particular marks of his individual character. Yet there is at least one passage which affords an insight into his sweetness of disposition and tenderness of heart. It is where he weeps much at seeing that there was no one found worthy to open the book of prophecy and loose its seals, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under



the earth. He wept from pity for God's creatures.\* Here were God's oracles set forth, and none was able to read them. All creation was rebuked, and put to open shame. They knew not God as he challenged them to know. Angels, spirits, and men, were visibly admonished of their imperfection.—The whole creation seemed brought into the condition of fallen man, to whom truth had so long been a mystery. How great then was his joy when in the all-prevailing Lamb he recognized his crucified Master, with what a throbbing of exultation did he hear the triumphal hymn sung to his praise by every creature, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. So was this faithful follower of the Lord comforted in his prison-house, and so has this his described vision enlightened the darkness of the prison-houses of martyrs and confessors. In his book they have read how vain is the opposition of cruel man against God, and have recited the hymn of his triumphant saints. Here to the glories of the bliss of the new Jerusalem, to the happy assembly of the first-born, to the company of the spirits of just men made perfect, they have raised their eyes in joyful and almost grasping hope from the afflicted and lacerated Church below, from tyrannous and infidel persecutors, from tortured martyrs and suffering saints. If their prison-house reminded them of Patmos, it was comforted by its vision.

But his epistles place his character in the clearest light. They are the very outpouring of pure charity, the very outbreathing of heavenly love. Opening with a solemn commemoration of his conversation with his divine Master while on earth, he proceeds to instances of his surpassing love towards us, shown in the redemption of the world, and thence deduces the necessity of our returning his love by obedience, and warns his readers against the busy perverters of the truth who were now abroad. This return of love is the very proof of our having passed from death to life. He dwells earnestly on communion with Christ, and the duty of loving him because he first loved us. The epistle is almost an expansion into detail of his Master's charge, "If ye love me keep my commandments." The same strain of divine love pervades the other epistles. Perhaps his peculiar character is never so forcibly brought out before us, as when we compare his writings with those of his comrade Peter. The spirit of their Master's compassionate mercy and loving-kindness dwells in both. But how different is its outward expression. There is an authoritative strain in Peter's style: a beseeching in John's. Peter's is varied in topics, nervous in language, full of his natural impetuosity and fire:

John's is confined to one or two leading ideas, redundant in phrase, and overflowing with sweetness, and simplicity. There is a menacing in the warnings of Peter, a deprecation in the admonitions of John. In the one we plainly discover the character of him who drew the sword for his Master: in the other of him who lay with his head in the bosom of his Master.

The very same character distinguishes his Gospel. The magnificence of his opening soon gives way to the expression of his love, and his narrative runs like a stream through flowery pastures. Its course carries us continually through scenes of winning sweetness. He describes to us the first attachment of his disciples to their Master, and he gives at full length our Lord's valedictory addresses, so overflowing with love. He carefully selects anecdotes which remarkably display the sympathy and love of Jesus, such as the resurrection of Lazarus, and exhibits a most lively delineation of our Lord, by an admirable selection from his sayings and doings, such as could be made only by one who had been continually in his company. We feel that we are indeed reading the narrative of him who lay with his head in his Master's bosom.

For the latter years of his life, St. John probably stood alone of all the train of the hearers and beholders of the Lord, and he was surrounded by those who knew him but through his preachers. He was the last who could tell those minute anecdotes of the Lord which can be communicated but by word of mouth alone, which require the voice, the gesture, to give them effect, and will not bear the formality of writing. If he ever indulged the garrulity of age, how precious that garrulity. The period of life to which old age delights to recur had been spent in the company of the Lord of life.—What a privilege must it have been to hear him. How must his Church have flocked around the old man, anxious to pick up every crumb as it were that fell beneath his table, for every crumb was of the bread of life. His end is strongly contrasted with that of his colleagues. His two companions in his Lord's especial favor, Peter and James the elder, sealed their faith with their blood. So too did Paul and James the less. But John died in peace amid the general peace of the Church. The apostle of love died amid love. He bequeathed the Church his Gospel, and he left behind him (and he alone) a succession of writers, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, which did glorious service in the holy cause. His very long life was of eminent advantage to the Church. Its government had time to settle, and receive his sanction, and the canon of the Gospels was completed and ratified by him. At the age of an hundred he closed his long labors, and slept in the Lord.

\* Revelations v. 3.

## PREFACE.

Custom seems to have rendered it almost necessary, for an Author never to appear before the Public without a Preface; in which something, if not concerning himself, yet concerning his work, is looked for, as a respect due to his readers. Yet Rousseau says, it is a part of the book never read, unless by women and children. The author, however, indulges a hope that this is not very extensively true; since, in writing the following introductory remarks, he certainly intended, as will appear from their length, something more than a ceremonious conformity to example.

The design of this Series of Lectures was—to diversify a little the ordinary course of ministerial instruction—to excite and secure attention by a degree of allowable novelty and curiosity—and to bring together various things pertaining to the same subject; so that they might aid each other in illustration and improvement, by their arrangement and union.

But why are they published? The writer is aware what an abundance of religious works is perpetually issuing from the press; and he would not wonder, if some should think that *he* has too often appeared before the public already. Yet he trusts an author is not necessarily supposed to say to his readers, "Now attend only to me." Surely many publications may be serviceable for different purposes, and in different degrees; and a writer may be allowed to conclude, that the production of his pen may obtain a measure of welcome and useful attention—without the vanity of supposing that it is superior to *every* other, or the folly of expecting that it is to supersede *any* other. If, too, the author be a public teacher, and has met with acceptance, it is natural to suppose that he will secure a considerable number of connections more immediately his own, and who will be rather partial to the writer, for the sake of the preacher. Such was the case here. In two or three days after this Course of Lectures was finished, a large number of copies was called and subscribed for, by those who had heard them.—Many of these applicants were persons whose opinion and desire would have had weight with any one who knew them; while all of them had claims upon the preacher, as stated, or occasional parts of his audience.

The author can truly say that he yielded to publish, with a reluctance which only an *ascertained* earnestness could have overcome. Yet he is now glad, especially with regard to his own audience, that the importunity was expressed, and has been complied with. For nearly thirty-five years he has been laboring to serve his present charge, in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace, and he hopes he may add, in righteousness of life: and though he commenced his connection young, yet such a period strikes far into the brevity of human life, and calls upon him to think, and feel, and act, with increasing seriousness and diligence, knowing that the night cometh, wherein no man can work; and to be concerned that after his decease, his people may be able to have the things he has spoken always in remembrance. The work, therefore, as a brief epitome of his preaching, will serve as a kind of ministerial legacy to be perused, particularly by the younger members of his church and congregation, when the clouds of the valley will be sweet about him; and by which, though dead, he may yet speak—perhaps, in some cases, to more purpose than while living. The work may tend to correct some pious

mistakes both on the right hand, and on the left.—It contains many of the author's views on important subjects, after considerable experience and observation. For such remarks his station has been favorable, and his opportunities numerous; especially from the variety and latitude of his religious intercourse. This has never been confined to Christians of his own denomination. He has not suffered prejudice so to magnify—what his convictions might have led him to consider the mistakes or imperfections of any who differ from him—as to make him overlook their excellences as individuals or communities; or to prevent his mingling with them in company, and co-operating with them in services; or to deprive him of that pleasure and profit which he knows may be derived from those who cannot frame to pronounce exactly the Shibboleth of a spiritual tribe. He has always preferred to study religion, not in its abstractions, but in its subjects; not in its speculative opinions, but in its practical principles; not in its distant generalities, but in its appropriated and particular influences. He has always endeavored to follow it out, from its too common confinement in certain notions, seasons, and services, into actual and ordinary life; and to esteem and applaud it only in proportion as it exerts and displays itself in that "wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

This may in some measure account for the desire which has given rise to the publication. For it is to be presumed, that there will be some considerable conformity between the views of a minister and the people of his charge after a voluntary, long, and perfectly affectionate connection. It is certain that these Lectures would not have been completely congenial with the taste of some hearers. *They* would in *any* course of religious discussion have said, "We want more of doctrine, and more of Christ." Now we are far from treating these terms *themselves* with contempt or disrespect. We love the doctrines of the gospel; and believe that it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. We attach importance to evangelical truth; and have no notion of piety without principle, or of good fruit but from a good tree—This is our creed: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Yet, we cannot be ignorant that the complaint we have supposed, is too often the whining and seditious jargon of a party; and the very last party in the world we should ever consult with regard to preaching. These desperate adherents to something not easily fixed and definable in sentiment, but always accompanied with a spirit as well known and invariable in its operation, as any of the laws of nature; are, in spiritual things, what some discontented zealots are in political; and as the latter render the cause of rational liberty suspicious and despicable, so the former deserve and disgrace the cause of evangelical religion—They are gospel radicals. They are not always even moral: they are never amiable. They neither pursue nor think upon the things that are lovely, and of good report. They set at nought all sacred relations, proprieties, and decencies; while many of them abandon family worship, and leave their children without any at-



tempts to bring them into the way everlasting, not knowing but they may be some of those against whom God "has sworn to have indignation for ever," and not daring to go before him, or to be profane enough to take the work out of his hands.—Self-willed are they; self-confident; presumptuous; censorious; condemnatory of all that are not initiated into their temper and exclusions. With regard to their ministers, they are not learners, but judges; and often make a man an offender for a word. In hearing, all is fastidiousness. Appetite has given place to lusting. They go to the house of God, not for wholesome food, but for something to elevate and intoxicate. The preacher is nothing, unless he can make them drink and forget their duty, and remember their danger no more. Their religion is entirely an impersonal thing, any further than as it consists in belief and delusion. They look for all in Christ, not as the only source from which it can be received unto us—this is truth—but as the only residence in which it is to remain, while they themselves continue the same. They are complete in him—not as to the all sufficiency provided in him for their actual and entire recovery; but without their being new creatures. They look after nothing in themselves—and nothing in themselves should be looked for as the ground of their acceptance with God, or as self-derived or self-sustained: but they look after nothing in themselves even as the effect of divine agency and communication—forgetful of the inspired prayer, "Create *in* me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me:" regardless of the assertion, "It is God that worketh *in* you to will and to do of his good pleasure:" subverting the promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: and from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit also will I put within you; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Their state is not a condition to be submitted to any process of trial—as those enemies to Christian comfort would have it, who admonish persons to examine themselves whether they are in the faith; and to prove their own selves; and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. Their peace requires that all this should, without hesitation, be taken for granted; while every thing is to be cried down as unbelief that would dare to lead them to question, for an instant, their security, or to keep them from being at ease in Zion.—The sinner is not only guilty, but diseased—but they are concerned only to remove the sentence of condemnation, while the disorder is left. They absolve, but not heal: they justify, but not renovate. The king's daughter is all glorious within, while her clothing is of wrought gold—with them the righteousness of Christ is a fine robe to cover a filthy body. All their sin, past, present, and future, is so completely done away, that it were folly to feel anguish on the account of it. Their miscarriages are not theirs; but those of sin that dwelleth in them. Their imperfections are regretless, because unavoidable—no man can keep alive his own soul.

Now we are willing to concede that *all* those from whom we occasionally hear complaints, do not go into these lengths; and we are persuaded that were these worthier individuals perfectly informed concerning the men we have very truly but inadequately sketched, they would exclaim, "My soul, come not thou into their secret; and mine honor, to their 'system' be not thou united." Yet *they* sometimes murmur, as if in sympathy with them; and borrow their language, unconscious whose technicality it is; and are in danger that their good should be evil spoken of. To be strenuous for evangelical preach-

ing is commendable; but they view the desideratum in too confined an import. They think it, if not improper, yet needless, for a minister to inculcate many things which he *must* feel to be binding upon him. "Oh!" say they, "the grace of God will teach people all this." The grace of God will incline and enable us to do all this: but it is the Bible that teaches. This contains all our religious information; and we only want to be led into all truth. The sacred writers never left these things to be taught by the grace of God, without instruction.—They never intrusted them to *inference*. They particularized and enforced them. There is not one of Paul's Epistles, a large proportion of which might not have been spared as impertinent, upon this plea: for as surely as the former parts lay the foundation doctrinally, the latter, labor to build us up on our most holy faith. But these would restrain a public teacher from the extensiveness of the gospel itself. They would oblige him to hold forth Christianity only in the first rudiments, not in the advanced science. They would confine him to a kind of abstract inculcation of a small class of principles; which principles are indeed unspeakably important, yet lose much of their importance, by being accompanied with certain alliances, and developments, and applications. Yea, they would not willingly allow him to do more than constantly iterate from Sabbath to Sabbath, a few well-known and favored sentiments, in a manner the most undeviating, and in phraseology the most hacknied. They prefer a scheme of divinity drawn up by some fallible fellow-creature, to the Scripture at large, which, like God's other works, no one can perfectly systematize; but in which, as in Nature, we have, instead of mechanism, infinite freshness, and richness, and variety, and irregularity; that is, order beyond our reach. They are sure, if not to oppose, yet not to aid; if not to stigmatize, yet not to countenance and applaud, any attempt the preacher shall make to extend the views of his hearers; to improve their understandings; to lead them through the whole land of Revelation in the length and breadth thereof; in a word, to do any thing that would follow up the recommendation of the Apostle, "Leaving therefore the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."

Here the Lecturer is unspeakably happy in being able to say to the people he addresses, "Ye have not so learned Christ." He, therefore, felt no embarrassment in the study or in the delivery of these discourses. He had only to consult his own convictions, and was not necessitated to think of the likings or dislikings of a sickly fancy, a perverted orthodoxy, a party spirit, or an anathematizing bigotry. Neither would he ever consent to officiate in any congregation where he could not stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free. This freedom he thinks a preacher cannot too highly value and assert in the discharge of his work—A freedom from the fear of man that bringeth a snare—inducing and enabling him to say, as he rises from his knees to enter the pulpit,

"Careless, myself a dying man,  
Of dying men's esteem;  
Happy, O God, if thou approve,  
Though all beside condemn."

—A freedom (whatever advantages they may afford him by their collectiveness and arrangements) from the fetterings and exclusiveness of human systems of theology—a freedom from the least sense of any obligation requiring him, in the interpretation and improvement of any passage of Scripture before him, to force its natural and obvious meaning into any frame of Arminian, or Calvinistic theory or authority—A freedom also from spiritual favoritism, and

which might lead him, from *partiality*, to shun to declare all the counsel of God, as well as from timidity.

May the author be permitted to plead for a freedom of another kind?—An exemption from a wish to gratify the few, at the expense of the profit of many: an exemption from fastidiousness of composition and address: an exemption from such a primeness of diction, as admits of the introduction of no anecdote, however chaste, and shuts out the seizure of all hints suggested by present feelings and occurrences: an exemption from the too serious apprehension of little faults in seeking to secure great impressions. Here, to the intimidation and checking of the preacher, how often is he told of the dignity of the pulpit—as if there was any worthy, or *real* dignity in a case like this, separate from utility! What is the highest, and *should* be the most admired dignity in the preacher—but an apparent forgetfulness of every claim, but his object; and such an absorbing solicitude for the attainment of it, as leaves him *unable* to notice inferior things? Without such an impression, no man can do a great work gracefully; for if in the execution he is observed to be alive and attentive to any littleness, it will revolt the beholder, instead of pleasing him. An officer in the midst of action, will be all occupied in urging and completing the conflict—what should we think of him if he turned aside after a butterfly, or showed himself at liberty to mind and adjust his ring, or his dress? Let a preacher be as correct as possible; but let him think of founding his consequence upon something above minuteness and finesse. Let him never imagine that his *influence*, or *dignity*, will ever be impaired by his feeling and displaying a noble elevation; an indifference to every thing else—while the love of Christ bears him away, and he is *lost*, in endeavoring to save a soul from death, and to hide a multitude of sins. There is nothing with which a preacher should be less satisfied than a tame correctness, or his producing something that will bear criticism, but which is as devoid of excellence as it is free from defect. He that winneth souls is wise. What is every other praise of an instrument, if it does not answer its end? What is every other commendation of a preacher, if he be useless? unimpressive? uninteresting? What is it, that nothing is complained of, if nothing is applauded? What is it, that nothing offends, if nothing strikes? What is the harangue that dies in the hearing, and leaves nothing for the hearers to carry away, to think of in solitude, and to speak of in company? What but a fault is the smoothness of address, that prevents every excitement that would rend by terror, or melt by tenderness? A sermon may resemble a French Drama that observes inviolably all the unities, and challenges severity as a finished piece; but excites no sentiment, and produces no effect. But give us rather the Shakspeare, who, with blemishes which a less shrewd observer than Voltaire may detect, actually succeeds; arrests; inspires; and enchants. We need not plead for coarseness or faults. A speaker may be animated, yet decorous and orderly too; but in popular addresses, if either fails, it is far better to sacrifice correctness to impression, than effect a nicety of endeavor. Let the squeamishly hypercritical remember that he is laboring to little purpose while consuming his time and attention in subtle accuracies, and polished dullness. And let the man who is in earnest about his work, never yield to an under anxiety resulting from the possibility of a trifling mistake; and which, as Gray says of penury, would repress his noble rage and chill the genial current of his soul. Let him feel his subject, and follow his ardor, recollecting that great excellences or impressions will redeem small failures;

and even prevent their being noticed—unless by the little and perverse-minded, who only sit to discover and remark any minute impropriety—adders to every thing else in the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

There is also some difference between the heat of delivery and the coolness of review; between the leisure and discrimination of readers—and hearers. More freedom therefore will be permitted in preaching than in publishing; and what the press may forbid, the pulpit may tolerate. Yea, the pulpit may require it, especially for the sake of a large part of the congregation. For these, though they have not the advantage of culture, yet have souls as well as others, and their moral wants must be attended to. Now a preacher need not grovel down to the lowest level of the vulgar; yea, he should always take his aim a little above them; in order to raise and improve their taste: but he must not soar out of their sight and reach. Yet he may be tempted to this by the presence of others. But let him remember, that those who are more educated and refined, ought, not only to endure, but to commend his accommodation; yea, and they will commend, instead of censuring him, if they are really concerned for the welfare of their brethren less privileged than themselves. If they are benevolent and pious, as well as intelligent, they will always be more pleased with a discourse suited to general comprehension and improvement, than with a preparation, which, in other circumstances, they might relish as an intellectual treat for themselves. To which we may add, that there is not so great a difference here as some mistaken and elaborate orators imagine. Genuine simplicity knows a mode, which while it extends to the poor and unlearned, will equally please their superiors. For—

‘So it is when the mind is endued  
With a well-judging taste from above;  
Then, whether *embellished* or *rude*,  
’Tis *nature* alone that we love.

“The *achievements* of art may amuse,  
May even our *wonder* excite;  
But *groves*, *hills*, and *valleys* diffuse  
A *lasting*, a *sacred* delight.

In one of his charges, Archbishop Usher says to his clergy, “How much learning and wisdom, my brethren, are necessary to make these things plain!” Could he have said any thing more fine and judicious than this? Here is the proper direction and exertion of a minister’s talents, whether natural or acquired. They are not to unfit him for any part of his office—which they may easily do, at the stimulation of vanity or pride; but to qualify and aid him the better to perform it. It is to be feared that some do not employ *their* abilities to make things plain—if they do, we can but lament their deplorable want of success. But it would seem as if their aim was to dazzle, rather than enlighten; to surprise, rather than inform; to raise admiration at their difficult composition, rather than with the Apostles to use great plainness of speech. Even their claim to originality often regards only the mode of representation. The ideas which they wish to pass off as new, when examined, are found only commonplace sentiments. The well is not really deep; but you cannot see to the bottom, because of their contrivance to make the water muddy. They are not really tall; and so they strain on tiptoe.—They have not a native beauty that always appears to most advantage without finery; and so they would make up the deficiency by excess, and complexity, and cumbersomeness of ornament. He who cannot rise in the simple grandeur of a morning sun, can excite notice by the gaudy brilliancy of



manufactured fireworks; and flame and sparkle down, as well as up. To notice in *some respects* a style that has been constructed (for it could hardly have been involuntary) so inverted, involved, obscure, difficult—half blank verse; might seem to be going out of the author's province. He leaves, therefore, others to remark, that this style, though it may be extolled by the lower orders of professional men, and half-educated artisans, and excitable youth, with a smattering of science and a bad taste; it will never obtain the approbation of the really judicious and discerning. He leaves others to remark, that it is disdained by scholars, and at war with classical purity. Lord Kames tells us, that in every language, clearness of expression and simplicity of thought are the first marks of elegance. Milton observes, that nothing accords with true genius but what appears easy and natural when once it is produced. Agreeably to which, Addison says, that the secret of fine writing is, for the sentiments to be natural, without being obvious; and contends, that what produces surprise without being simple, will never yield lasting pleasure to the mind. Hume, in his Essay on Refinement and Simplicity in Style, comes soon to this conclusion: that it is better to err in the *excess* of simplicity, than in the excess of refinement; the former extreme being more beautiful and less dangerous than the latter. He observes, that the works read again and again with so much pleasure, all lean more to the one side than to the other—that it is increasingly needful to be guarded against the extreme of refinement when learning has made much progress, and good writers appear in every species of composition; as men will then be the more tempted to endeavor to please by strangeness and novelty, and so fill their writings with affectation and conceits—and that simplicity may be lost, not only in subtlety, but in effort and straining; and nature and ease be buried under an artificial load of laborious diffusion.

But while the preacher leaves others to speak upon this subject as a literary question, it cannot be improper for him to notice it in another and far more important connection; and to deprecate the adoption of such a style in *divinity*, and to warn his younger brethren against every approach and tendency towards it. For how perfectly is it unlike the language of inspiration! What an entire contrast does it form with the simplicity there is in Christ Jesus! And how useless must such hard and unintelligible diction be to ordinary minds! And who are the mass in almost every audience? They, who are often comparatively neglected, if not despised, there. Leighton, and Watts, and a thousand other names, whose works praise them in the gate, and are now useful to *all* might have been so written as to be useless to *many*. Had our Saviour felt the low ambition of some, he might easily have been beyond the comprehension and the attraction of the multitude. In him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He spake as never man spake. But was it a proof against his manner, or the highest recommendation of it, that the *common* people heard him gladly; and that *all* bore him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth? The author would not for the world be in the condition of that preacher whose attendants do not, cannot say, "Here the poor have the gospel preached unto them." They not only need it, and should excite our compassion by their temporal privations and sufferings, as well as by their spiritual condition; but they are capable of understanding, and receiving, and admiring it. Learning is not necessary here. The doctrines of the gospel are not the result of research, but testimony. There are funds of good sense and good feeling in the common people as well as in others;

and they are even capable of appreciating what is truly superior in preaching, if it be properly presented and *illustrated*. The fault is always much more with the preacher than with them. He does not adapt himself to those he professes to teach; he does not make them his aim; he does not study them; he does not throw himself into their modes and habits of thinking and feeling; he has nothing simple and natural in his official being. They understand and relish the Pilgrim's Progress; and the history of Joseph; and the parable of the lost sheep, and of the prodigal son. They are easily informed and impressed by the sayings of our Lord, and the language of the Scriptures. But nothing is to be done in them without excitement; and they are addressed without emotion. Their very understandings must be approached through their imaginations and passions; and they are lectured as if they had none. They are never to be starved into a surrender; and they are circumvallated and trenched at a distance. They are only to be taken by an assault; and they are slowly and formally besieged. They want familiar and seasonable imagery; and to show the preacher's learning, they are furnished with allusions taken from the arts and sciences.—They want striking sentences, and the words of the wise, which are as goads and as nails; and they have long and tame paragraphs. They only want truths to be brought home to their consciences, for they admit them already; and they are argued and reasoned into confusion, or doubt. They want precedents; and are furnished with precepts. They want instances; and are deadened by discussions. They want facts; and are burdened with reflections.

The Bible adapts itself to the state of our nature; and knowing how little all are, and how little many *can* be affected with abstract representations of virtues and duties, it blends religion with history and biography; so that while we read the rule, we may see the exemplification; and be reproved, excited, and encouraged, while we are informed. It is not a series of logical definitions, like dead bodies well laid out and dressed—all is life and motion. It gives us actions rather than words. We view the fruits of righteousness growing on the tree. We have, not the pilgrimage, but the pilgrim; and go along with him from the city of destruction to the shining city. We are not spectators only; we are his companions; we are interested in all he meets with; we weep when he weeps, and rejoice when he rejoices. It is not Christianity that is set before us, but the Christian; and we attend him following his Saviour, denying himself, taking up his cross, resisting temptation, struggling with unwearied patience through a thousand difficulties, braving with fortitude every danger, and emerging out into glory, honor, and immortality. By nothing can the attention of children be so effectually caught as by facts and narratives; and "men are but children of a larger growth." What is the greater part of the Old Testament but history? There is scarcely a Psalm, but refers to some fact in the experience of the composer. What are the prophets, but historians by anticipation? Many of them state various past, and cotemporary events. The book of Jonah has only one prediction in it; but it describes in a most vivid and interesting manner, the actual and wonderful occurrences that befell the bearer himself. How pleasing and striking are the short and simple annals of Ruth! What is the book of Job but the matchless dramatic story of a good man in his affluence, his adversity, and his deliverance?—In the book of Genesis, we are present at the creation, the destruction, and the re-peopling of the world; we live, we travel, we worship with the patriarchs; we stand round their dying beds. It is needless to add, that the remainder of the Penta-

teach, with the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, are all of the narrative kind, including general and individual sketches of the most wonderful people on earth. But what is the gospel itself, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Is it any thing like our treatises and bodies of divinity? Is it the history of the Son of God? While the Acts are a portion of the history of the Apostles: and the Epistles are evermore enlivened with characters, incidents, and allusions. Is this the work of God?—Does he know perfectly what is in man, and necessary to him? Has he herein abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence? Is it not, then, surprising that religious instructors should not think it necessary or desirable to resemble him? And can any thing be more unlike this inspired, and attractive, and irresistible, and impressive mode, than the structure of many of the discourses that are delivered in our public assemblies? Hence, they awaken so little attention; and yield so little pleasure; and take no firm hold on the mind and feelings, especially of the young and the common people—

“And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.”

General declamations and reflections do little in a popular audience. The preacher must enter into detail, and do much by circumstances. Nothing can penetrate, but what is pointed. Every indictment must particularize and specify. The eye may take in a large prospect; but we are affected by inspection. We must not stand long with our people on the brow of the hill, showing them a wide and indistinct expansion, but take them by the hand, and lead them down to certain spots and objects. We are to be characteristic—not only with regard to persons, though this is of great importance, but also with regard to vice and virtue, faults and excellences. To what purpose is it to admonish servants to be good? The question is, in what is their goodness to appear? Therefore, says the Apostle, “Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” Does Solomon only condemn drunkenness? What is there in the wretched crime; in its excitement, progress, evil, danger, misery, that he does not strike? “Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright: at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thy heart shall utter perverse things: yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shall thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.”

A preacher must also indulge in a certain degree of diffusiveness. He who passes rapidly from one thing to another is not likely to impress, or indeed even to inform the majority of his audience. To affect them, he must commonly dwell upon the thought a little; and sometimes more than a little; even with an enlargedness that may seem needless; and with a repetition in other words and exemplifications, that may go for tautology, with persons of quicker apprehensiveness. Hints will please the scholar, and set his own mind pleasingly in motion; and he can instantly add from his own stores. But many have nothing but what they receive. Besides, some are more struck with one species or instance

of illustration and confirmation, and some with another: and he whose mind was wandering or headless at first, may haply be seized afterward. For precept must be upon precept, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. And the preacher will often see by the look and manner of a hearer what he failed to accomplish by a first stroke, has been done by a second.

The author is perhaps furnishing materials with which to condemn himself. And let him be condemned, as far as he deviates from these rules. He is fully persuaded of their goodness and truth. He can only say, it has long been his endeavor to conform to them. Upon the same principles he has acted with regard to a few other things, in which, if he has erred, he has erred from design.

Such is the large use he has made of Scripture language. If holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, we should prefer the words the Holy Ghost useth. They are surely, on their own subjects, the most definite and significant. They are also well known: and it is a great advantage in addressing hearers that we are not perplexed with terms and phrases; but have those at hand which they understand.—What a difficulty do we feel in dealing with those who are ignorant not only of the doctrine, but the letter, of the Scripture. It is probable that a very judicious critic and eloquent Divine\* would censure the author as in an extreme here; yet he seems to allow it to be an error on the safer side; and thinks that a great and original writer has condemned the copious use of Scripture language with too much severity. We avail ourselves of his striking remarks in his review of Mr. Foster's Essays. “To say nothing of the inimitable beauties of the Bible, considered in a literary view, which are universally acknowledged; it is the book which every devout man is accustomed to consult as the oracle of God; it is the companion of his best moments, and the vehicle of his strongest consolation. Intimately associated in his mind with every thing dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other; and when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a religious discourse which nothing else can supply. Besides, is there not room to apprehend that a studied avoidance of the Scripture phraseology, and a care to express all that it is supposed to contain in the forms of classical diction, might ultimately lead to the neglect of the Scriptures themselves, and a habit of substituting flashy and superficial declamation, in the room of the saving truths of the gospel? Such an apprehension is but too much verified by the most celebrated sermons of the French; and still more by some modern compositions in our own language, which usurp that title. For devotional impression, we can conceive that a very considerable tincture of the language of Scripture, or at least such a coloring as shall discover an intimate acquaintance with those inimitable models, will generally succeed best.”

If it be allowed from all these considerations, that the language of the Bible has such claims, will it not follow that the frequent use of it, will tend to bring the preacher's own language into some degree of keeping with it? Surely that style is best for religious instruction which most easily and congenially incorporates the composition of the Bible with it. This is not the case with some modes of writing and speaking. But if there be unsuitableness, and difficulty, and discordancy, in the junction; which is to blame? and which requires to be altered in order to their readier coalescence? the language of Scripture, or our own? Knox has affirmed, that no writer or speaker will ever be so tender,



and pathetic, and touching, as he whose diction is most imbued with the manner and phraseology of the sacred authors.

It will be perceived that the lecturer has not unfrequently made use also of the language of poetry. This is sometimes condemned; but a sentence of this kind will often relieve, and often revive the attention; while it serves to fix a sentiment more firmly in the memory. And is it not in this very way that God has addressed men? How much of the Bible is poetical! How curiously constructed are some of its divisions! In one case a whole Psalm is divided into as many sections as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet; every division contains an equal number of verses; and each verse begins with the same letter. "I," says inspired Wisdom, "dwell with *prudence*, and find out knowledge of witty inventions." And will a man inquire—not whether an usage accords with God's condescension, and is likely to be useful, especially to the middle and lower classes—but whether, after a poetical quotation, his style will not seem to sink; or whether the thing be sanctioned by any first-rate authority—and this too—this weighing of trifles; while he is doing the work of eternity, and has souls perishing in view! Paul knew the end would not sanctify sinful means; but he knew it justified the use of any lawful ones; and therefore, with a nobleness of mind that raises him infinitely above the intellectually proud and unaccommodating, he could say, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.—And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

In the following documents, some things may be found looking rather inconsistent with each other. This arises from a wish the author felt strongly to represent and recommend—whatever it was—the *present* subject. And he is greatly mistaken if this be not the method of the sacred writers. They never seem afraid of expressing themselves too forcibly at the time. They never stop to qualify the things they are delivering. There *are* qualifications to be found; but these are brought forward in other places, and where they are themselves the subjects enforced. Our Saviour makes no limitations or exceptions, when he is enjoining confidence in the care and providence of God—"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?—Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." But the same authority says elsewhere—"Go to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways and be wise; which having no guide,

overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" "Let thine eyes look right on, and thine eyelids straight before thee." "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." He must be a spiritless teacher who never produces the surprise of paradox; who never alarms the timid and cautious; and whose strength of statement and urgency, does not furnish some seeming contradictions.

The author is not sure the same thought or expression may not occur more than once in these Lectures; or that he may not have used them before, in some of his other publications: for writers are often the least acquainted with their own works; being afraid to read them, lest they should discover faults too late for correction, and be only rendered miserable by the discovery. Should this be the case, it is not only hoped that they may be excused on the ground of inadvertence; but also that they may prove not wholly unuseful, being found in different connections, and applied to different purposes.

The subjects were commonplace in themselves; and could be only rendered novel in any degree, by their order and treatment. They were also very extensive subjects, and the difficulty of the preacher arose from the necessity of selection and concentration. He was obliged to reject much that offered, and to confine himself in each instance to two or three views. These ought to have been the most leading, and comprehensive, and profitable. But here the author can only be answerable for intentions and endeavors.

To conclude. No thought was entertained of any thing more than the delivery of these Lectures from the pulpit, till many of them were preached. They were therefore only distinguishable from his ordinary public addresses, by their length. Into this he was led by a wish to do some justice to the subject without a second discourse upon the same topic, which always divides and impairs the impression. Till a desire began to be expressed for their publication; he had only short notes from which they could be written out. But he then began to secure them, especially by hints and mementos after preaching: and he is persuaded his friends will find the Lectures more than substantially the same they heard with so much candor and acceptance. They will also observe, that he has secured as far as possible even the style in which they were delivered.

One thing will be perceived in each of the discourses. He has largely treated the subject in a way of application. He did not intend to hold up the Christian to barren contemplation. His aim was to make his hearers fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise of Christ by the gospel.

Behold the awful portrait, and admire.  
Nor stop at wonder: imitate and live.

WILLIAM JAY.

Percy Place, Sept. 10.

# THE CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATED.

## LECTURE I.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN CHRIST.

"*I knew a man in Christ.*"—2 COR. xii. 2.

"A CHRISTIAN is the highest style of man;  
And is there, who the Cross wipes off,  
As a foul blot, from his dishonored brow?  
If angels tremble, 't is at such a sight!"

So sings, with his accustomed energy and excellence, our admired Young. It is not, however, with the poetry of this passage we now have to do, but with the sentiment contained in it.

Yes; "a Christian is the highest style of man." Inspiration itself pronounces him to be "more excellent than his neighbor," however that neighbor may be distinguished. Who, on a fair trial, can bear a comparison with him?—The rich? But he has "the true riches;" durable riches, with righteousness; "the unsearchable riches of Christ."—The honorable? But he is "great in the sight of the Lord;" he has "the honor that cometh from God only."—The learned? But he is made "wise unto salvation;" he has "an unction from the Holy One, and knoweth all things." The sons of heroism?—But, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." He subdues enemies that vanquish all other victors: he is more than a conqueror; and the Captain of his salvation thus eulogizes and rewards him: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God; and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my NEW NAME."

It was a high encomium our Saviour pronounced on his forerunner: "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." But observe the addition: yet "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Even Adam in his original state, was nothing to a Christian. Redemption delivers us from far greater evils than creation; the one rescues us only from non-existence; the other, from sin, and death, and hell. The blessings of grace are far superior to those of nature. What was the garden of Eden to "the new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness?" What was the tree of life to Him, the true source of immortality, who came "not only that we might have life, but have it more abundantly?" We were made by an exertion of wisdom and power; but we are saved by the " manifold wisdom of God;" and by "the exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

When therefore a man, ashamed of such an infinite distinction, endeavors to free himself from the imputation as a reproach, it is credible that

"If angels tremble, 't is at such a sight."

For however deluded we are, they judge of things according to their real value and importance. The world may shout at a victory that has slain its thousands, and filled domestic life with "the fatherless and the widow;" but "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Men may disesteem and neglect "the suffer-

ings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;" but "the angels desire to look into these things."—Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but John "heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Your preacher, therefore, is more than justified in a plan, the design of which he has already intimated, and which he now proceeds to lay before you. It is to hold up the CHRISTIAN to your view, in some very important and comprehensive conditions and relations. To this design, we dedicate Twelve Lectures.

The First will lead you to contemplate the Christian, in CHRIST.

The Second, in the CLOSET.

The Third, in the FAMILY.

The Fourth, in the CHURCH.

The Fifth, in the WORLD.

The Sixth, in PROSPERITY.

The Seventh, in ADVERSITY.

The Eighth, in his SPIRITUAL SORROWS

The Ninth, in his SPIRITUAL JOYS.

The Tenth, in DEATH.

The Eleventh, in the GRAVE

The Twelfth, in GLORY.

"Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

We are this morning to behold the Christian, IN CHRIST.

If this Lecture is more general than the remaining ones, let it be remembered that it is fundamental to the whole series; and with the subject of it, every thing in religion begins. All in your Christian character is derived from Christ. You cannot be a Christian unless you are in him.

Of this state the Apostle here speaks. "I knew a man," says he, "in Christ." The mode of expression is humble and modest; but by this "man" he unquestionably intends himself. We all have known some in Christ; and this should awaken our joy and praise. But religion is a personal thing.—We cannot be saved by the grace of others. Yet their experience should encourage and induce us to apply to the same source. For they were once destitute; and he who enriched them is able to supply us, and is equally willing. He even intends that every instance of his mercy should be a plea against despair. Hence the "man" before us could say, "Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

To come nearer our subject. There are three states mentioned in the Scripture with regard to Christ.

The first is to be *without* Christ. "At that time," says the Apostle, to the Ephesians, "ye were without Christ." This is true of the heathen; and it is true of all those who are living in sin, even in the land of vision. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." This is the state of Nature.

The second is to be *with* Christ. "I long," says



Paul, "to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." "And so," says he, "shall we be for ever with the Lord." This is the state of Glory.

The third is to be *in* Christ. This is the state of Grace. I need not remark how frequently the Scripture speaks of this condition. Let us reduce its declarations to some easy and brief arrangement. Of this state let us consider,

- I. THE NATURE.
- II. THE IMPORTANCE.
- III. THE EVIDENCE.

I. THE NATURE.—What is it to be *in* Christ? It is to be a Christian. Paul, speaking of certain individuals, says, "who were in Christ before me:" that is, they embraced Christianity before he did.—"The churches," says he, "which are in Christ:" that is, Christian churches, in distinction from those which were Heathen and Jewish. "Salute, (says he,) Apelles approved in Christ;" that is, an approved Christian.

It is needless to multiply examples, as the thing is undeniable. But admitting the fact, there must be some reason, and some very powerful reason, not only for the frequency of the expression, but for the expression itself. The language is perfectly peculiar. There are indeed various relations and connections in life; and some of our fellow-creatures are much attached to others, and very dependent upon them; yet we never say, a patient is *in* his physician; or, a servant *in* his master; or, a disciple *in* his teacher. But we constantly read of our being *in* Christ—and "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." New terms imperceptibly make way for new doctrines; nor has any subtlety of the enemy of souls succeeded better in corrupting the mind from the simplicity there is in Christ, than modernizing the language of divinity. When men are shy of the "words the Holy Ghost teacheth," we are always afraid they are beginning to be ashamed of the things.

The expression means a state of union with Christ. This union may be considered as visible and professional; or real and vital. This is not a distinction without a difference; there is a foundation for it, in reason; and it is even necessary, to harmonize the testimonies of divine truth. Thus our Saviour says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Thus a man may be in him, and be *fruitless*; and be in him, and *perish*. But can either of these be true, when applied to those who are Christians indeed; and of whom, by a change of metaphor, it is said, "I will put my Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments and do them?" and "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand?" We therefore must admit, that a person may be in him by profession, when he is not in him in reality; in him, by a form of godliness, while he denies the power thereof; in him, by an external alliance with his church, and by the use of his ordinances, while he is a stranger to the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the grace of God in truth. As religion ceases to be persecuted, and becomes respectable, such pretensions will be frequent; and they may for a while impose upon men, and even good men: but God is not mocked—and what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God casteth away his soul?

But there is another union with Christ: and *this* union is not only real and vital, but the most intimate, and entire, and indissoluble; independent of the changes of time, unaffected by the diseases of

the body, uninjured by death, untouched by the destructions of the last day.

Let us look at it. But how shall we do this? Here the sacred writers lead the way; and were we like-minded with them, our senses would minister to our faith, and every thing would admonish us of the Lord of all. The sun would tell us that there is a nobler orb above him, "with healing under his wings." The wind would remind us that "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We should think of Christ and of Christians as one with him, whenever we saw a foundation and a building; a fountain and a stream; a shepherd and his sheep; a king and his subjects; an advocate and his client. None of these indeed can do justice to the subject; the subject being so peculiar in its nature, and so boundless in its extent. The sacred writers feel this, and therefore, to increase their efficacy, they throw off from the images they employ every imperfection in their kind; they add to them attributes which are not naturally inherent in them; and they multiply their number, that they may accomplish by combination what could not be done by individuality; and thus, though these allusions fall short of the glory they are applied to illustrate, they aid our meditations. With many of these we are furnished in the Scripture. Let us glance at a few of them; and let us be thankful that instead of their having any thing novel in them, they are well known and familiar.

We are in Christ as we are in Adam. "In Adam all die: so in Christ shall all be made alive." From the first we derive our natural being, and from the second our spiritual. By the one we fell, by the other we rise again. By the disobedience of one, many were made sinners; and by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. From the one, sin reigned unto death; by the other, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

It is commonly supposed that the ark was designed to be a type of Christ: it certainly affords a striking image of him. A deluge was coming on, and Noah and his family were exposed to the flood, as well as others. But they escaped uninjured; for they availed themselves of the shelter provided. They entered it in time; and the Lord shut them in; and they could not have been safer had they been in heaven. Not a drop of the torrents from above, or of the deep below, touched them; and through the universal wreck they sailed out into fair weather and into a new world. But there was no other mode of deliverance. Swimming was useless; a boat was a vain thing for safety; and truly in vain was salvation hoped for from the hills and the multitude of mountains. All were overwhelmed that contemned the Divine appointment, for though there were abysses of destruction every where, there was only one ark. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other Name given under heaven among men whereby they must be saved," than the name of Jesus. "I am," says he, "the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

A peculiar provision under the Law was also an emblem of our subject. The man committing casual murder was exposed to the avenger of blood, who had a right to kill him wherever he should be found, unless in one of the cities of refuge. The place of immunity was situated on an eminence, to be visible from afar. The road to it was open, and wide, and prepared; and when there was any dan-

ger of mistake, a direction pointed—"Refuge, Refuge." To this, therefore, the offender, incapable of trifling or tarrying, fled for his life; and it is easy to imagine what were his feelings, his anxiety, his anguish, till he had entered the asylum; and the calm and confidence he enjoyed as soon as he could turn and face the foe, and say "Thou canst not touch me here." To this, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who would well understand the allusion, refers, when he speaks of those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them."

Christians are in Christ as the branches are in the tree. It matters not how near a branch is to a tree—yea, if it lean against it; yea, if it be corded to it, or even nailed, it can neither flourish or live, unless it be in the stock. But when it is in the tree, the very same sap that pervades the one, flows into the other, and sustains and fertilizes it. And, says our Saviour, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for *without* me ye can do nothing."

And to mention nothing more—They are in Christ as the members of the human body are in the head. For he is called "the head of his body the Church;" and believers are said to be "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." They are real and living parts of him. As the head governs and directs the body, they are under his guidance and authority: and as the body is actuated by the head, and depends upon ligatures with it, and influences from it, so they live by him; and of his fulness they all receive, and grace for grace.—Let us,

## II. Consider the IMPORTANCE of this state.

We often, in determining the worth of a thing, *appeal to authority*: and we are much influenced in our decision by the competency of the judge. Here it must be confessed the multitude are not a safe guide, nor yet many of those who by their rank and attainments may seem entitled to take the lead in society. They rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow, and deny themselves, and compass sea and land for fortune and for fame. But their urgency in the things of time and sense, forms a deplorable contrast with their insensibility and negligence with regard to the things that belong to their everlasting peace. So that were we to estimate the value of the prize by the zeal of the candidates, we could not deem it worth a moment's thought. But we do not appeal to the blind and the deaf in questions of color and of sound. How can the votaries of the god of this world appreciate a kingdom that is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost? "The world knew him not" when on earth: and it is not wiser now. But the spiritual judgeth all things, though he himself is judged of no man. Let us turn to Paul. Paul was a man of learning and wisdom. He had been the greatest enemy to the cause of the gospel, and had, from the most irresistible and perfect conviction, become its adherent and advocate. He was not a novice in experience, but had been for many years acquainted with the Saviour, studying him as a Minister, as well as believing in him as a Christian, when he wrote to the Philippians. Yet what was his language? "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." Thus he was fully persuaded that a union with Christ was a state infinitely desirable; and that his estimation was well founded will appear—

If we survey the state in connection with the ad-

*vantages inseparable from it, but never to be enjoyed without it.* And here I must make a selection. For I find myself in a garden abounding with productions, all of which I wish to commend; but I have only time to lead you to notice a *few* of the flowers and the fruits; and in doing this, order is not necessary.

But is it desirable to be delivered from captivity and bondage—a bondage the most degrading; a captivity the most oppressive? Here you enjoy it. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Is it desirable to be safe from condemnation? Condemnation is to be judged of by the doom to which it consigns us. Now, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And who can appreciate the misery of this curse? Who knoweth the power of his anger? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That is, none that will affect their security. Conscience may condemn; the world may condemn; Satan, the accuser of the brethren, may condemn—but these are not the Judge. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Is acceptance with God desirable? Here we have it—"This," says God, "is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The complacency extends to us, as well as to himself. "Thou hast loved them," says the Saviour, "as thou hast loved me." He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: and this is true both of our persons and our services. "He gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor; and we could not have been originally so dear to God as we now become, through his mediation."

Tell me, ye who delight in communion with God, and are so often constrained to repair to him for mercy and grace to help in time of need, Is it good to draw nigh to God? And can you go to him freely as your Father? at all seasons? on all occasions? and in every thing by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God, with an assurance of success? "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him."

In him we have all our supplies and endowments. "We are complete in him." Where can I find righteousness? In vain I look even to my duties and to my holy things. These are all defective and polluted; and if they *deserve* any thing, it is condemnation: and if *thus* enters into judgment with us, no flesh living can be justified. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Thus I appear before him, "not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is of faith;" and this not only justifies me from all things, but gives me a title to eternal life.—And where but in him can I find strength? The journey I have to take, the race I have to run, the warfare I have to accomplish; the duties I have to perform; the trials I have to bear: all these are not only above my natural powers, but even above the grace I possess, without fresh and constant supplies of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. But he cries, "*my* grace is sufficient for thee, for *my* strength is made perfect in weakness." Surely therefore shall one say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

Where shall we end? "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." But *he* is heir of all things; therefore, says the Apostle



"All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. You are united to him, and he is united to God. You are in him, and he is in God. How secure, then, is the happiness of believers! Their life is hid—with Christ—in God! How incapable of rupture is the connection between them and God, unless the medium that unites them can fail! But "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We may also view the importance of this state, *in connection with certain seasons when it must be peculiarly felt.* There are four of these.

The first is the hour of *conviction*. What is the reason that many of you read and hear of this state with such indifference? that you make light of the invitation to enter it? and go your way, one to his farm and another to his merchandise? You do not feel yourselves in the wretchedness and jeopardy it implies, and is designed to relieve. One question forced from a wounded spirit—"What must I do to be saved?" would magnify this state more than all the arguments your preachers can ever employ. When a man is awakened to serious consideration; when he examines his character and condition; when he looks and sees what he is, what he wants, what he deserves; when he perceives the vastness and certainty of his danger; when he finds himself perfectly unable to effect his own deliverance, and knows also, that the help of men and angels united could not reach the desperateness of his case—then, how inexpressibly desirable appears a connection with him, who is able to save to the uttermost! who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification! in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell! Then how delightful to hear him say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" Then how blessed, by believing, to enter into rest, and "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he has now received the atonement!"

The second is the day of *trouble*. And this may always be expected; for a man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. And what, in the wreck of property, in the loss of relations and friends, in the failure of health and comfort—what will you do without "the consolation of Israel?" While your cisterns are broken, the fountain of living water is far off; while your lamps are extinguished, no Sun of Righteousness is nigh. But if you had an interest in him who is the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, your trials would be all sanctified and alleviated: at what time you were afraid, you would be able to trust in him: in the multitude of your thoughts within you, his comforts would delight your soul. "I am cast down, but not destroyed. I feel my losses, but I am not lost. The waters are bitter, but this tree heals them. The Cross takes away the curse; yea, turns the curse into a blessing. It is good for me that I am afflicted. I know this shall turn to my salvation, through prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

The third is an hour that awaits you all. The day of trouble may come—the hour of *death* must come. The one is probable, the other is absolutely certain. For what man is he that liveth and shall not see death? The living know that they shall die. But though death be a universal event, it is not a universal privilege. It would be the most dreadful delusion in any of you to say, "It is bet-

ter for me to die than to live;" for however severe your present sufferings may be, they are only the beginning of sorrows. If death find you out of Christ, it would be good for you if you had never been born. There will be nothing to screen you from the power with which it is armed by sin. It will deprive you of all you hold most dear. It will terminate your space for repentance. It will close all your opportunities of mercy. It will put a seal upon your character and condition for ever. It will arrest, and deliver you to the judge, and the judge will deliver you to the officer, and you will be cast into prison, and you shall not come out thence till you have paid the uttermost farthing. But hear the voice from heaven: "Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord*." He in whom they are found, has abolished death, by the final destruction of the state, and the present removal of the sting; by the change of its nature and office; by turning it into a departure, a sleep; by making it endless gain. If death finds you in Christ, it will be the angel of the covenant; it will wipe away all your tears; it will lead you to the altar of God, to God your exceeding joy.

You may continue to neglect and despise the Friend of sinners *now*, but you will have other thoughts soon. Death will discover and display the errors of life. How will you then wonder that the trifles and vanities which now engross you should ever have acquired such an ascendancy! How will you be amazed that you constantly disregarded him who alone can befriend you when all other helpers fail! Then you will learn, but in vain, that an interest in Christ is the one thing needful. Cannot you look forward? Cannot you foresee this, before the knowledge can result only in despair?

For, fourthly, There is another day, and from which the former derives its greatest dread—it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the *judgment*. I do not ask you what are your thoughts now?—but what will they be, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise? when the elements shall melt with fervent heat? when all that are in their graves shall come forth? when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened? What will you then do without a friend, an advocate? Then the tribes of the earth will mourn and wail because of Him. Then they who have despised Him, and rejected Him, will cry to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. But the believer in Jesus lifts up his head with joy, for his redemption draweth nigh. Here he looked for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and now he enjoys it. He is found *in* him, and therefore he is found of him in peace—and hears him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To which we may add, that all this admits of anticipation by faith; and now, even *now*, he can say—"I am not ashamed; for I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."—Let us, therefore,

### III. Consider the EVIDENCE of our being in Christ.

There is no doubt but it is very desirable to know this; and it would be strange to suppose that it is impossible to ascertain it; especially since we are not only required to examine ourselves, and prove whether we are in the faith, but also to rejoice in the Lord always. Paul, we see, was assured of this—"I knew a man in Christ:" and he knew himself to be so, not as he was an Apostle—for a man might have been an Apostle, and not in Christ: this was the case with Judas—but, as a believer. Official service is very distinguishable from personal expe-

rience, and gifts do not pledge the existence of grace. John does not say, we know that we have passed from death to life because we can prophesy or speak with new tongues, but "because we love the brethren."

When, however, we speak of this confidence, a little explanatory caution may be necessary. People often call it, the full assurance of faith. This is indeed a scriptural expression, but it occurs only once; and then it is used to denote, not a certainty of appropriation and experience, but a full persuasion of our being allowed, by the new and living way which he has consecrated, to enter the presence of God in prayer, and partake of all the blessings of his salvation. There is, therefore, an expression we prefer to this—it is "the full assurance of hope." Our present confidence is the confidence of hope, and of hope only. This hope may be considered in a state of conflict with doubts and fears; or in a state of victory and triumph over them: in the one case, there will be anxiety and uneasiness; in the other, joy and repose; but the degree does not alter the nature of the thing itself.

On what, then, is this confidence founded? Dreams? Visions? Voices in the air? Sudden impulses? Passages or promises accidentally presented on opening the Bible? and applied, regardless of the connection from which they are taken, or the characters of those by whom they are adopted? On what strange, what dubious, what unauthorized evidences, do some rest their eternal hope! "To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

All the errors, however, in judging ourselves, are not on one side. There are mistakes on the right hand as well as on the left: and though they are not so dangerous, they may be distressing and even injurious; and therefore we must guard against them.

In deciding your condition, you should not make the experience of others too much the standard of your judgment; for though, as in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man; yet, along with a general conformity, there is frequently much difference, especially in the degree and duration of those spiritual exercises which commonly precede the joy of God's salvation, and attend the part of divine doctrine that first seizes our attention.

Neither should you be too minute in your inquiries. The blind man, who was not able to answer every question pertaining to his case, could yet say, "One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see." A man may be sure of his natural life, though he knows not when it commenced; and he actually possessed the boon, long before he was able to prove it to himself, though he always evinced it to others. What we have to look after should be influences and effects; and these may be undeniable, without the knowledge of the time, the means, and the manner of their production. A slow and gradual operation is less striking than a sudden and instantaneous; but the increase of the corn sown, is as real, and as divine too, as the multiplication of the barley loaves, in the gospel.

When we are deciding our Christian state, we should not try ourselves by attainments. The reality of divine grace is one thing; the degree is another. We may be of the same species with a fellow-creature, though not of the same stature: and though not equally advancing, we may be in the same way. This I know is liable to some abuse; and we are always afraid, when we thus speak, lest people should avail themselves of it, "to settle," as the Scripture has it, "upon their lees;" or in other words, to be content with a hope of their safety, while they are careless of religious progression.

Thus it is said, Cromwell having asked a minister, "What was the lowest evidence of regeneration," said, on receiving an answer, "Then I am safe." And yet there are moments of gloom and depression, in which the question must be—*not* have I much grace? but have I any? When the house is on fire, the tradesman does not think of taking stock; his only concern *then* is to save.

It is a good evidence in your favor, if you *value the thing*; and while the multitude ask, "Who will show us *any* good?" can say—*One* good only can serve my purpose; and the language of the Apostle, and of the martyr, is not too strong for me—"None but Christ, none but Christ!" "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

It is a token for good, when you *feel much concern and anxiety about this state*. It has been said, that it is easy to believe what we wish; but Paley remarks that the experience of every man gives the lie to this maxim. We all know, that in proportion as we attach moment to a thing, and find our happiness involved in it, we find it hard to persuade ourselves that we have a firm hold of it; we are alive and awake to every supposition of uncertainty; we still want stronger proof and confirmation. Does the miser feel it easy to believe that his money, the god of his idolatry, is safe? A mother hears that the vessel is wrecked on a foreign shore, but that her son is rescued from the deep. There is nothing in the world she so much desires to be true; yet is it easy for her to banish her solicitude and doubt? She will peruse every document; and examine every witness; and scarcely be able to think he is living, till she presses him in her arms. Now we may reason from the less to the greater. A man who feels the infinite importance attached to the soul and eternity, will always find it difficult to consider himself a child of God, and an heir of glory; and will never cease saying, "Give me a token for good, that I may rejoice in thee. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Smoke is not fire, yet there is no smoke where there is no fire—doubts and fears are not faith, but they are gendered by it.

They who are united to Christ are characterized by the *change* which they have experienced. This change is not only real, but entire—entire, not in the degree, but extent. It is complete in nothing; but it is begun in all the Christian's views, and sentiments, and dispositions, and dependence, and taste, and motives, and pursuits. Hence, says the Apostle, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

They are also distinguished by the *principle which governs them*. Hence we read, "They that are in Christ Jesus walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The former will excite as well as the latter; but they do not yield to it: and his servants ye are, whom ye obey. The one is opposed, the other is encouraged. The one enters into the mind by fraud or force like a robber, producing alarm and misery, and allowing of no peace till he is expelled. The other is invited; and when he comes, is welcomed and entertained as a friend. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,



if the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of his."

And this leads us to remark, that all they who are in him *resemble* him. "He that saith he dwelleth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked." Not only gratitude and consistency require this, but evidence. "If," says the holy Saviour, "I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." There must be likeness in order to fellowship. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? Or what concord hath Christ with Belial?" Christ and Christians are not like Nebuchadnezzar's statue: the head of which was of gold, while the subordinate parts were of inferior metal, down to the feet which were partly iron and partly clay. "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one." He is a partaker of their nature; and they are the partakers of his. They are not of the world even as he is not of the world. They have the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus: a sameness of sentiment and feeling; a oneness of heart and soul—"he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."

Men and brethren—Are you in Christ?

Perhaps you have never yet asked yourselves this question. You have been careful of your property; and every legal doubt has led you to call in the lawyer. You have been anxious for your character, and every whisper of slander has led you to vindicate your reputation. You have been all alive to your health, and every symptom of disease has instantly led you to consult the physician. But to this very hour—and you know it—to this very hour—never once in your lives have you retired, and seriously asked yourselves—Am I in Christ? And yet you acknowledge that your eternal happiness depends upon it, and that this life is your only opportunity to attain it, and that this season is not only short but uncertain, and that "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh!" Yet you call yourselves rational creatures! Yet you allow that "a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished!"

My dear hearers—You admire one and another of your fellow-creatures, and think how happy you should feel if you could make their advantages your own. And what are these advantages? Are they not things that perish in the using? that afford no satisfaction in the enjoyment? that profit not in the day of wrath? that cannot deliver from death? And are these the things for which you envy men of the world, who have their portion in this life? Is it not time, especially for some of you, to grow wiser; and to form your estimates by the judgment of God which is always according to truth! "Search the Scriptures." There you will find that they, and they alone, are wise, and safe, and happy, who can say, to "the praise of the glory of his grace, we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true; even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." Envy these—not by grudging them their blessedness, but by longing for a participation of it; and praying with one, who though a king himself, yet overlooking all his earthly advantages, kneeled and said, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor thou bearest unto thy people: Oh, visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, and glory with thine inheritance."

Let this be your concern—let it be your *supreme* concern—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." And let it be your *immediate*

concern. You cannot be happy too soon; and while you hesitate and linger, the opportunity may be irrecoverably lost. Therefore, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; and call upon him while he is near." And for your encouragement, be persuaded that you will not, cannot seek him in vain. All things are now ready. Rise, he calleth thee—and says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

How ought we to conduct ourselves towards those that are in Christ? Surely, if they have little of earthly distinction, they should be judged of by their treasure in heaven. Whatever they are in themselves, their destination, their rank, their *relation*, should ensure them respect. They are to be valued for *his* sake with whom they are one; and *shall* be one for ever. In consequence of this union, if we slight and injure them, *he* feels it as if done to himself: "He that touches them, touches the apple of his eye." In the same way, he regards our attentions and kindnesses to them, as if they were favors conferred upon himself: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

Finally. How ought they that are in Christ to conduct *themselves*? How cheerfully, how gratefully ought you to feel! Once far off, and now nigh! Once strangers and enemies, and now fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God! Once having nothing, and now possessing all things! You have had much forgiven—you should love much. He has done great things for you—you should largely inquire what you can do for him; and, "by the mercies of God, present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service." O you who live by this Saviour, make him known. Recommend him. Begin with your own family. You are concerned to provide for your children. But how is your love operating? Is it not in laying up for them treasure on earth? or seeking great things for them in the world? It would be infinitely better to leave them in Christ, than to leave them with thousands of gold and silver; or to leave them with kings upon the throne. Forget not your friends and your neighbors. Hold forth the Word of Life impressively and invitingly to all around you. Teach transgressors his ways, and let sinners be converted unto him. What says the poet?

"O 'tis a Godlike privilege to save;

And he that scorns it is himself a slave.

Inform the mind: one beam of heavenly day

Will heal the heart, and melt his chains away."

What says the Apostle? "If a man err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Amen.

## LECTURE II.

### THE CHRISTIAN, IN THE CLOSET

"Enter into thy closet."—Matthew vi. 6.

THE curiosity and attention of men are awakened by very different excitements, according to their temper, and education, and habits in life; and what is despised by some as worthless, is studied by others with peculiar delight.

But there is really a gradation in the value of objects themselves. The works of art display great skill and ingenuity; but the productions of nature are much more deserving of our inspection; witness the remark of our Saviour concerning the lilies of the field—"Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." But the operations of

grace far surpass the results of nature: for they regard the soul and eternity, and display more of the perfections of Deity. Therefore, says David, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."—Therefore, he himself says, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

The subjects of divine grace, therefore, are the most interesting characters in our world. Many, indeed, neglect and despise them; but there is one class of persons, always dear to a minister of Christ, who feel them the most powerfully attractive. They are those who, roused to a sense of their danger, are exclaiming, "What must I do to be saved?"—who, longing to return to him from whom they have revolted, are inquiring, "How shall I come before the Lord, and bow before the High God?"—who, bound for the glory to be revealed, are "asking their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." If you are going a journey of great difficulty, and yet of unspeakable importance, and you were in company with a multitude of individuals, *he* amongst them all who had travelled the road himself, would be the man of your preference; and you would endeavor to get near and converse with *him*. To a suffering patient, the most engaging person he could meet with, next to the physician—for none would bear a comparison with him—would be the man who had himself labored under the same complaint, and could tell of the manner in which the remedy is applied; and whose own recovery would be a living voucher not only of its safety, but of its efficacy and success.

In a series of discourses, to bring the CHRISTIAN before you, for your admiring and practical contemplation, last Lord's Day we viewed him IN CHRIST: we are this morning to consider him

#### IN THE CLOSET.

Wonder not, my brethren, that we bring forward this view of the Christian so early. By this he is distinguished from the commencement of his religious concern. He soon turns aside from the vile and the vain, and bewails himself alone. *They* cannot enter into his feelings *now*. They know nothing of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, unless as a subject of wonder or contempt. He feels his sin to be a burden too heavy for him to bear, and longs for ease; but the "wide world" cannot relieve him, cannot sympathise with him, cannot direct him to "the rest and the refreshing." All great sorrow seeks solitude and secrecy: "He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him; he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope." Did ever language describe the experience of the penitent so beautifully, so feelingly, as the words of our heavenly bard?

"I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd  
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
There was I found by one, who had himself  
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,  
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.  
Since then—  
With few associates, and not wishing more,  
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,  
With other views of men and manners now  
Than once; and others of a life to come."

Yes, his chief business *now* is with God; and this is not to be managed in a crowd; and as this business continues and increases through life, abstraction and retirement will always be desirable, always necessary. His religion cannot flourish—cannot live without it.

Our theme is very extensive. Let us detach from it four things. Let us review the Christian in his Retirement, with regard

- I. TO PLACE.
- II. TIME.
- III. ENGAGEMENT.
- IV. MOTIVES.

#### I. With regard to PLACE.

Our Saviour says, "Enter into thy closet." The word signifies any retired apartment; and some imagine that he employs a term of such latitude, that we might have no excuse for omission, if we are unfurnished with a place appropriated more expressly to pious use.

The connection requires this extension of meaning. Our Lord applies the word "closet" obviously in opposition to the "corner of the street;" and in distinction from the openness of the "synagogue," where persons could be "seen of men," and for which purpose these situations were chosen by the Pharisees. But *He* would have his disciples to avoid all appearance of ostentation; and perform their devotions where they would be concealed, unless from a witness in heaven. Yet if the end, which is privacy, can be answered, the place would be indifferent.

"Where'er we seek him he is found;  
And every place is holy ground."

"I will that men pray *every where*," says the Apostle, "lifting up holy hands, without wrath, and doubting." God said to Ezekiel, "Go forth into the plain, and there I will talk with thee." Isaac made a closet of the field. Daniel of the river-side, as well as of his chamber. Nathaniel, of the fig-tree. Peter, of the house-top.

A variety here must be admitted, or the duty cannot be performed by many at all. For what numbers are there who are unable to command a convenient room for religious engagement. This is a trying case: and especially to those who have been accustomed to enjoy such an advantage. The preacher knew a pious female, who had been reduced from a mansion, and compelled to occupy a hired and contracted apartment; yet nothing in the humiliating and distressing change seemed to affect her, but her want now of a place of seclusion, in which to indulge her private devotion. For the "peculiar people," even in common circumstances fail not to give proof of their distinction: "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." If, my Christian friends, you have the privilege of accommodation, be grateful for it, and use it well: and if you have not, remember your Heavenly Father knoweth it, and that where "there is first a willing mind, a man is accepted according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not." Be as retired as you *can*, since you cannot be so retired as you *would*; and if your circumstances will not allow of your being hid, and some of your family must witness your exercises, be not afraid of opposing the Saviour's pleasure. Though you are seen of men, you are not seeking to be seen by them.

It is possible to retire mentally, even in company; and many an act of devotion is performed by the Christian without the formality of the exercise, when he is busied in his ordinary concerns. Nehemiah worshipped secretly, without retirement; and, while, as a cup-bearer, he was performing his office in attending on the king, "prayed to the God of heaven."

The Jews had their Proseuchæ, oratories, or praying-houses, in secluded situations, by streams of water, and in woods, and on the sides of moun-



tains. The Scripture more than once refers to such places. In one of these it is probable our Saviour passed the night he spent in devotion; and in one of these Paul seems to have addressed his hearers in the vicinage of Philippi. They were a pleasing and a wise provision; as persons could here indulge themselves in private devotion whenever they were prompted by disposition and opportunity; and especially those who had scarcely any other sacred retreat. We have not such accommodations: but Nature itself, during a large portion of the year, affords us advantages; and it is wonderful that persons do not oftener avail themselves of these interesting spots of retirement. We have known some who, whenever the season and the weather allowed, retired thus, to perform their morning and evening devotions. Instead of their minds being diverted, and their thoughts dissipated, by the scenery, the works of God refreshed and impressed them, and furnished them with excitements and assistance. And there are those now living, who, if ever they feel devout, feel it in a garden, or a field, or a meadow. The bubbling spring; the apple-tree among the trees of the wood; the rose of Sharon; the lily of the valley; the purple rising and the golden setting of the sun; aid their communion with him who is all in all. The sowing of the grain; the blade; the ear; the full corn in the ear; the mower filling his hand, and the binder of sheaves his bosom; the husbandman and the gleaner—all these teach them to think and feel devoutly. They love the creatures of their God, and feel them their friends; and while the herd grazes at their feet, and the sheep repose at their side, and the lambs sport in sight, a voice seems to say, "Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee." They hear God in the breeze; they sing his praise in the note of the bird; they make every scene a book; every object a preacher; every place a temple.

We only add, what an advantage is the omnipresence of devotion, in that solitude which is not chosen, but brought upon us by the necessity of circumstances; when lover and friend are put far from us by death, and the heart within us is desolate; when travelling, and we droop in the loneliness that is felt in the midst of strangers; when by distance or condition, our connections are beyond our reach, and we are inaccessible to them. Ah! says Jonah, in the midst of the sea, "I will look again towards thy holy temple." "From the ends of the earth," says David, "will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed." Cowper has not overlooked this consolation, in the language he has put into the mouth of the lonely islander—

"But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,  
The beast is laid down in his lair;  
E'en here is a season of rest,  
And I to my cabin repair.

"There's mercy in every place,  
And mercy, encouraging thought!  
Gives every affliction a grace,  
And reconciles man to his lot."

We consider it,

II. With regard to TIME.

When are we to enter our closet? and how long are we to remain there? You are not to be there *always*. You will hear, as we proceed, that the Family, the Church, the World, have all claims upon you. Every duty has its season, in which alone it is beautiful and acceptable. "No duty," says Bishop Hopkins, "will be approved of God, that appears before him stained with the murder of another duty." Yea, a Christian sometimes forces

himself away from the delights of solitude, to engage in services, far less pleasing, than lying down in these green pastures, and feeding beside these still waters. But self-indulgence, even when the enjoyment is religious—must yield to the will of his Heavenly Father, as soon as it is known.

*Retirement*, however, should be *frequent*. Yet, if you ask *how frequent*? I do not pretend absolutely to determine. The Scripture does not decide: it was needless to decide—as needless as the prescribing how often you should eat and drink. Your wants will regulate the one; and your love will regulate the other. Love is the Christian's grand principle; and love does not require to be bound; it is ingenious; it is urgent; it is contriving; and will get, with all possible expedition, to its object. Besides, no rule *can* be laid down that will apply equally to all. There is a great difference in our conditions, and our callings. At different periods too, the Providence of God may vary our duties. Thus good people formerly spent much more time alone, than the peculiarities of the day in which we live, will allow us. It does not follow that they had more piety than Christians now: their religion was more compressed, and flowed in a deeper channel; but that of modern Christians, though shallower, is more diffusive and rapid. They had not those openings for activities abroad—those calls to extensive and manifold beneficence and exertions, which the followers of Christ now have. *These*, therefore, cannot gratify themselves by spending hours together in their loved seclusion. *They* hear a thousand voices crying, "Come, and help us." They see that "the fields are already white unto harvest;" they know that "the harvest is great;" that "the laborers are few;" that the season is short; that the weather is uncertain; and the consequences of negligence, not only incalculable, but remediless.

Christians, however, should get as much leisure for the closet, as they are able. And in order to this, they should guard against the waste of time; they should economize time; they should redeem time from indecision and trifling, and especially from the vile and wretched consumptions of unnecessary sleep. David mentions three times a day; "Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud." Daniel observed the same rule: "He went into his house; and his windows being opened in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." This was a custom much recommended, and observed by many of our forefathers; they thought, and they wisely thought, that a few moments of retirement in the middle of the day, as well as morning and evening, tended to check temptation and vanity, and to keep the mind in the things of God. But *twice* a day, at least, the Christian will withdraw. Less than this will not surely keep us "in the fear of the Lord all the day along"—and for this, the morning and evening will be deemed the most suitable periods. Under the law, a lamb was offered every morning and every evening. How much is there in each of these returning seasons to excite and to impress! "It is a good thing," says the Psalmist, "to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High. To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

As to the particular hour, this must be a matter of discretion: only it should be as early as possible both in the morning and evening, to avoid disturbance in the one, and drowsiness in the other. I will put amusements out of the question. But if you return late from visiting, it is better to retire even late than not at all. Yet in many of these cases

would it not be preferable to retire a few moments before you go? Would you be less prepared for company? Would you be less safe? Would you be less edifying?

What may be done at any time, is often done at no time: and while we have no plan or purpose, we are open to every casualty that may seize us, and turn us aside. It is therefore necessary to have appointed seasons for retirement; and desirable to adhere to them as invariably as we can.

There are also occasional and extraordinary calls to private devotion, when more than usual time should be allowed, that the mind may be affected with the event, and obtain the peculiar assistance the case requires. I should have a poor opinion of that Christian, who would not employ more than common retirement, when going to change his residence, his calling, his condition in life; or to take any important step, the consequences of which may affect not only his comfort, but his conduct and character for ever. When Jacob was going to meet his exasperated brother Esau, who was coming against him with four hundred men, he was found alone wrestling with the angel. When our Saviour was going to ordain his twelve Apostles, the day following, "He went out into a mountain to pray; and continued all night in prayer to God." And when his hour of suffering was drawing near, we find him in the Garden of Gethsemane, and retiring three times even from his selected disciples, and praying. Let us,

### III. Consider this retirement with regard to its ENGAGEMENTS.

Many retire. But the tradesman retires to cast up his accounts, and to plan his schemes; the statesman, to enjoy his relaxations and ease; the philosopher, to pursue his theories and experiments; the poet, to rove among the aspects of nature, or to lose himself in creations of his own—and perhaps God is not in all their thoughts. So far from inviting Him into their solitude, when they apprehend his approach, they repel the impertinent intruder; and say unto God, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." But we are speaking of religious retirement. The Christian withdraws for three purposes.

First, He is engaged in reading. This enlarges his views, and impresses his mind, and furnishes him with aids to devotion. But what does he peruse? Principally the Scriptures. I say principally, because other books may be occasionally read to advantage, and we have a plenitude of excellent works for the closet. Yet I confess, the Scriptures alone appear to be the best reading in retirement, especially for the poor, and those who have little leisure. They are the fountain; other books are streams; and streams are seldom entirely free from something of the quality of the soil through which they flow. Who would not draw the water of life for himself from the spring-head! The Scriptures come immediately from God and lead immediately to him! There is a boundless variety and fulness in them. They are always new. They entertain, while they teach; and profit, while they please. There is always something in them that bears upon own character and condition, however peculiar it may be. "They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." I would recommend, generally, a regular reading of the sacred volume: for every work of God is pure: and whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope. But "let him that readeth understand." It

is better to peruse a paragraph with attention and reflection, than carelessly and without observation, to run over several chapters.—For,

Secondly, He is engaged in Meditation. And, my brethren, it is desirable that you should employ your own powers; for you will be more affected and benefited by the efforts of your own minds, than by the thoughts of others. The faculty will be improved and increased by exercise; and cannot be acquired without it, any more than a man can learn to swim by never entering the water. And surely you cannot be at a loss for subjects. If your reading does not supply you immediately with materials, there are the seasons of the year, the state of the world, the condition of your family, your own individual circumstances, temporal and spiritual. Two subjects are always at hand—your own depravity and unworthiness, of which fresh proof is given every day and every hour; and—the "love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." In his sufferings and glory, the angels always find enough to attract and engage their profoundest thoughts; and shall these be less interesting to you,—to whom they are not only true, but important; not only wonderful, but infinitely necessary? They are all your salvation; let them be all your desire; and say, with David, "My meditation of him shall be sweet."—"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."—"How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with thee." Whatever the subject of your meditation may be, content not yourselves with considering it generally and abstractedly; but take some particular view of it, and bring it home to yourselves. "Is the Lord thy portion, O my soul? Dost thou hope in him? Art thou an heir of this promise? Dost thou stand in the way of this threatening? Art thou living in the performance or neglect of this duty? Say not, 'and what shall this man do?' but, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'"

Thirdly, He is employed there in Prayer. This is the special design of it. This is what our Saviour here enjoins: "Enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, Pray." If ever you are at a loss to meditate, surely you can never be at a loss to pray! How numberless are your wants! How much have you to implore for yourselves and others! How much to confess at the foot of the Cross! How much to call forth your thanksgivings and praise! And all this is included in Prayer.

And the manner need not discourage you. For here the excellency does not consist in the mode of expression—the desire is all in all. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Even words are not necessary here. God reads deep meaning in the tear; and hears heavenly eloquence in the sighs of those that seek him: and often the most acceptable and successful intercession is made "with groanings which cannot be uttered."

These are the engagements of the Christian in his retired moments. But it is not necessary that he should perform all these exercises always; though it is very desirable that they should be all included; or that he should observe them precisely in the order we have stated them. They may, sometimes, alternately precede each other; and they may sometimes be intermingled. We have an instance of the blending together of these exercises in the retirement of David, with the recital of which we shall conclude this division of our discourse. For, as soon as Nathan had waited upon him, and had de-



livered the words of the vision—"Then went king David in and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. For thou, O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant; therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it; and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."—Let us consider retirement,

#### IV. With regard to its MOTIVES.

The obligation might be enforced from the authority of God, whose will is supremely binding on the consciences of all those who are informed of it; and whose language ought always to be, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." It might also be enforced by example. We could show, how the most eminent saints, and the most busy too, have abounded in this employment—and at the head of all, we could present the Lord Jesus himself, whose conduct has the force of a law upon his followers, who in vain profess to abide in him, unless they also walk even as he walked. How often do we read of his withdrawing himself, to be alone with his Heavenly Father! And can any of you dare to intimate, Ah! he needed retirement; but I can dispense with it!—But while it is enjoined by the highest authority and sanctioned by the highest example, it comes recommended by the highest advantage; and every thing unites to prove that it is a reasonable service. Mrs. Berry says in her diary, "I would not be hired out of my closet for a thousand worlds. I never enjoy such hours of pleasure, and such free and entire communion with God, as I have here: and I wonder that any can live prayerless, and deprive themselves of the greatest privileges allowed to them." If the twelve Apostles were living in your neighborhood, and you had access to them, and this intercourse drew you away from the closet, they would prove a real injury to your soul; for no creature can compensate for the want of communion with God.

We may connect retirement with the acquisition of knowledge. "Through desire, a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom." This is peculiarly true of one kind of wisdom, and which the heathen oracle pronounced to be of heavenly descent—Self-knowledge.—For how can those, who are for ever engaged in company, and engrossed by business, become acquainted with their character and their state? How can they compare themselves accurately with the word of truth; and look after the workings of the hidden man of the heart; and weigh their motives; and measure their deficiencies; and detect the sins of their holy things; and "walk humbly with their God?"—like those who retire with Him, and in his "light see light?"

Retirement is necessary to reduce the force of secular influence. Where is it the world deceives us,

allures us, overcomes us? Not when we are alone. Not when it is contemplated in the presence of our Bible and our God. There the fascination drops off. There we see that whatever successes we have gained, we are still losers, without "the one thing needful." There we feel that the favor of man, who is a worm, is less than nothing and vanity, compared with the friendship of God. There we wonder that we have ever submitted to be the slaves of folly; and vow against the tyrant in future.

"When I can say, my God is mine;  
When I can feel his glories shine;  
I tread the world beneath my feet,  
And all that earth calls good or great."

Is the resemblance of God a trifle? This results from our intimacy with him. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." But while "a companion of fools shall be destroyed, he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise." We soon assume the manners, and imbibe the spirit of those with whom we are familiar, especially if the individual be a distinguished personage, and we pre-eminently revere and love him. Upon this principle, the more we have to do with God, the more we shall grow into his likeness, and "be followers of him, as dear children." When Moses descended from communion with him, his face shone: and although he was not aware of the lustre himself, the people could not steadfastly behold him for the glory of his countenance; and he was constrained to hide it under a veil. The Christian, too, may be insensible of his excellences and proficiencies; but his profiting will appear unto all men; all will take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus.

Retirement prepares us for all other services.—Judge Hale, in his Letters to his children, makes no scruple to say, "If I omit praying, and reading a portion of God's blessed word in the morning, nothing goes well with me all the day." Dr. Boerhaave said, that "his daily practice of retiring for an hour in the morning, and spending it in devotion and meditation, gave him firmness and vigor for the business of the whole day." He who goes forth from God, after inquiring his will, and committing himself to his care, is the best fitted for all the successes or disappointments of life. It is alone with God, that the minister best qualifies himself for his work; it is there that he is wrought into the due temper of his office; it is there he rises above the fear of man, that "bringeth a snare," and resolves not to "shun to declare all the counsel of God;" it is there he is inspired to say,

"Careless, myself a dying man,  
Of dying men's esteem:  
Happy, O God, if thou approve,  
Though all beside condemn."

He is the last man in the world who should be "to be had." He should learn to resist, with the firmness of a martyr, all encroachments on his holy solitude. His hearers will soon learn, by the want of savor in his ministrations, that he loves to be more abroad than at home, and is fonder of the parlor than of the closet. Whereas, the man that issues from frequent and long retirement, will ascend the pulpit as Aaron entered the Tabernacle of the Congregation, when the holy oil had been poured upon his head, and the fragrance filled the place. To speak of the Christian's preparation for public worship, may be deemed legal or superstitious by some; but the Scripture speaks of it, and the godly have always found their account in it. Previous retirement detaches the mind from earth; it composes the thoughts; it tends to prevent distractions in waiting upon God; and aids to produce that seriousness of spirit, which is essential to our edification by the

means of grace. They will always profit most by the sanctuary, who are much in the closet.

It furnishes also a *good evidence of our state*. Do not judge of yourselves by what you are before men—What are you with God? Your sincerity is chiefly evinced by your regard to the *unseen* duties of religion. These show that you are actuated by pious principle, and not by any of those inferior motives which produce appearances. In public duties you are open to the observation of others. Hypocrites may lift their hands and eyes; and affect great fervor and zeal. Curiosity may prompt our repairing to the ordinances of the Temple; and the dispensation even of divine Truth, in excellency of speech and elegance of manner, may prove an amusement; and persons may flock to it as to a concert. Thus we know it was with Ezekiel's hearers. "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." If you are with a person whom you dislike, his presence is tolerable in a large company, where you have other attractions—though even then you would rather he was absent; but should they withdraw, how embarrassed and miserable would you be with him alone! Some of you seem attached to the House of God; but we often wonder how you would feel, if, upon the separation of the assembly, you were "*detained*" like Doeg "*before the Lord*."

The *freedom* we enjoy in the exercise, is no inconsiderable recommendation of private devotion. Here we come even to his seat: we reach the secret place of the Most High. Here we are free from the restraints we feel in public. Here we are not condemned as deceivers, or ridiculed as enthusiasts, if we prostrate ourselves before God, or pray like our Saviour "with strong cryings and tears." I know not why we should be ashamed to be seen weeping, yet so it frequently is—but here the eye can pour out tears unto God. Here we may sigh, and pause, and kneel a third time "saying the same words." Here the mind is affected with those minute but touching recollections and peculiarities which cannot be admitted into public worship.—Here we may pray for others, in a way we could not do before them, without offence. Would they abide to hear us beseech God to deliver—One of them from the love of money? Another, from a fondness for extravagance? A third, from a hateful and odious temper? Here you can lay open, with proper self-abasement, the secret workings of your own pride, or envy, or carnality. Here you may pour into the bosom of God, things which you could not divulge to your dearest friend or relation. Every heart has a bitterness of its own; and this is frequently, what it is least at liberty to communicate. But here no secret is hid; here no complaint is suppressed. Here, "in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, we make known our requests unto God;" and, as the consequence of the full disclosure, we are "careful for nothing;" and "feel a peace that passeth all understanding, keeping our heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

But ought we to overlook the *promise* which the Saviour has here given us, and with which he would engage us to the performance of this duty? It would be a reflection upon his wisdom and goodness. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Let us observe the inducement.

It includes the *Divine Presence*. "Thy Father which is in secret." He is everywhere; but he is, it seems, peculiarly in the closet. Here "he is waiting to be gracious, and exalted to have mercy."

Here he is clothed in no terror to make you afraid. Here he is, not as a *Judge* on his tribunal to arraign you as criminals; nor even as a monarch on a throne of state, to receive you as subjects; but as your *Father*—eager to embrace you as "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." Do children dread to enter a room where a loved and honored father is to be found? Would not this be a sufficient attraction to enter it? "When shall I come," says David, "and appear before God?"

It includes his *inspection*. "And thy Father which seeth in secret." He is not regardless of you; he is not ignorant of your condition; he knows what is the mind of the Spirit. Your desires are before him, and your groaning is not hid from him. He sees you, but not with eyes of flesh. He is no respecter of persons. He will not fail to notice you, however poor and despised. He views you with approbation. The prayer of the upright is his delight. "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

It includes *recompense*. "He shall reward thee openly." He "never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain." But surely it is enough for a benefactor to be ready to attend to the applications of the distressed, without promising to reward beggars for knocking at his door; and to bestow on them, honor that shall distinguish them in public! as if, instead of being urged by their necessities, they had been performing some very meritorious action! The advantage of prayer is all our own: there can be nothing like *desert* in it. And yet to stimulate us to attend to a course founded entirely in a regard to our welfare, the Lord of all makes himself a debtor to his supplicants; and engages to confer upon them not only a real, but a public and acknowledged recompense. Even *here* he puts a difference between his people and others. Even *now* he induces observers to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous;" "This is the seed which the Lord hath blessed." He can make even a Balaam exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But if at present any dispensations humble them, any clouds obscure them; they will be exalted in due time; they will soon shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God."

And now, my dear hearers, upon the ground of this important subject, let me address you with all fidelity and seriousness. For it is not a light thing—it is your life. I remember the observation of an old divine, and it is not too strongly expressed: "It is impossible for a man to be godly, who neglects secret devotion, and next to impossible that he should ever become so." To which he adds, "You may as well talk of a wise fool, a wicked saint, a sober drunkard, or an honest thief, as of a prayerless Christian!" If this witness be true, what are we to think, even of many who make some pretensions to religion! Their lives are full of action, and void of thought. They visit the temple, and are ever hearing sermons; but they are shy of the closet. Some of them, in this day of pious and benevolent institutions and exertions, make a figure in public; and their zeal flames at a distance; but it diminishes as it approaches nearer home, and it goes out in a dreadful darkness and coldness between God and their own souls.

In others, a little of this practice of retirement remains, lingering as the effect of custom or conviction only. But though they do not constantly,



they yet frequently neglect private reading, meditation, and prayer. Business, company, the most trifling pretensions, keep them from the duty; and they must be aware, if they would deal honestly with themselves, that whatever they do in this way, is their *task*, and not their pleasure. And need they be told to what character Job alludes, when he asks, "Will he *delight* himself in the Almighty, will he *always* call upon God?"

But some have *wholly* incurred the reproach; "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." Yes—for it was not thus with you once; you have left off to be wise, and to do good. "Apostasy," says Henry, "begins at the closet-door." There your irreligion commenced; and ever since this revolt from God, you have been departing more and more from him. O! what a day was that, when you first left your apartment without prayer! Perhaps you have forgotten it. But no! How can you forget your hesitation—your strugglings with conscience—the shame and uneasiness you endured, so that you longed and endeavored as soon as possible to lose the feeling. And you succeeded. You felt less the day following. At length you obtained a victory over every moral embarrassment. And now you lie down and rise up like the beasts that perish, and feel nothing.

But allow me to ask, Is not this neglect of religious retirement, a proof that the love of God is not in you? You treat men with attention; but He is not in all your thoughts. You salute your fellow creatures according to their rank and quality; but you never give Him the glory that is due unto his holy name. You visit your friends and acquaintances, but you never call upon God, though he is not far from any one of you. And have you nothing to do with *Him*? Is he not your Creator?—Your Preserver? Your Governor? Your Judge? Have you nothing to hope from Him? Nothing to fear? In his hand your breath is, and his are all your ways. Men deny the depravity of human nature; but we want no other proof of the mortifying truth, than this alienation of your mind from God. Can this be an innocent state? Could this be the condition of man, when God made him upright?—No! We do not go, we need not go to the refuse of society in prisons, and galleys. Setting aside all immorality and profligacy; when we see creatures shunning their Creator, and beneficiaries hating to retain their Benefactor in their knowledge; when we see men, instead of loving God with all their heart, banishing him from his own temple, and forbidding him the bosom that was made for himself—we know they *must* be fallen, and perverted, and guilty creatures; and without pardon and renovation can never enter into the kingdom of God. And this is your character; your danger. You are living without God. You are enemies to him. In vain you reckon upon your virtue and safety, because you may be free from the iniquities which disgrace others. Sins of omissions expose to condemnation, as well as positive transgressions. They are violations of the same authority. He that forbids, also enjoins. And you show your contempt of God, by neglect, as well as by insult. If two persons living together in the same house, were never to speak to each other, it would be deemed by all, as much a proof of dislike, as their fighting. Be not therefore deceived. You are wronging your own souls. All they that are far from God shall perish. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God."

Is not, therefore, another cause of your neglect of the closet, a guilty conscience? You are afraid to enter into solitude. You know that however cheerful you appear, you are far from being happy in

reality. You have your occasional forebodings; and it is safer not to look into your condition lest they should be confirmed. You surround yourselves with company, lest, being alone, truth should invade your delusion, or you should be haunted by the ghosts of your own thoughts. The value of your amusements does not consist in the pleasure they yield, but in their power to divert you from reflection. And this power they must soon lose. And its effect at present is limited. It is no easy thing to keep out light, where there are so many apertures to blind up; or to sleep on, where stillness is impossible. What a life of constraint and uneasiness are you leading! "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked."

Another prevention is to be found in creature attraction and worldly cares. You "mind earthly things." Your farm and your merchandise; your rising early, and sitting up late, and compassing sea and land, to carry some temporal interest—these furnish you with excuses; these yield you substitutes; these keep you from seeking those things that are above. We wish not to render you indifferent to your stations in life, or to induce you to undervalue the good things which he gives you to enjoy. But while you are "not slothful in business, be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," "Labor not" only, or principally, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." And if you obtain them not in this subordination, you will find them to be nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. Your table will become a snare. Your prosperity will destroy you.

We have thus again called you to enter your closet. And as to many of you, it is probable the application will be again refused. But another call will soon be addressed to you. It will be to die.—*That* call you cannot refuse. You live in a crowd—but you must die alone. You now hate silence—but you are hastening to "the house appointed for all living;" and

"Darkness, death, and long despair,  
"Reign in eternal silence there."

### LECTURE III.

#### THE CHRISTIAN, IN THE FAMILY.

"Then David returned to bless his Household."

2 SAM. vi. 20.

THE human frame is "a body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of every part." There is nothing in it irregular; nothing defective; nothing superfluous. The eye cannot say to the ear, I have no need of thee; nor the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee. The members are all connected with, all dependent upon, all subservient to, each other; and were you to separate them, the body, which is composed of the whole, would be at once disfigured and destroyed.

It is the same with the system of Christianity, as presented in the Scriptures of truth. By separation, it loses both its beauty and its energy; its beauty—for this consists in the fine adjustment of the parts; its energy—for this results from the harmonious operation of the whole. What God therefore has joined together, whether it be doctrine and duty; or command and promise; or privilege and service; or hope and fear—let not man put asunder.

The zeal of some professors is not always according to knowledge, or such as to evince a "heart

right with God." It is not full of "good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy." For these are nearly allied. Partiality is always a proof of hypocrisy; for if you are upright before God, and sincerely desirous of pleasing him, you will come to him, not to dictate, but to submit; not to choose, but to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments."

A Christian is not a perfect character; but he is a character. He is always the same; every where the same. The same in prosperity and adversity; the same in public and in private; the same in the dwelling-place, as in the temple; the same in the family, as in the Church. If there be any difference, his *immediate* connections will have the advantage; and looking towards those who have the best opportunities of knowing and observing his religion, he will be able to say, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."—When Whitefield was asked, whether a certain person was a good man, he replied, "I know not—I never lived with him." And Philip Henry remarks, that "Every man, in religion, is really, what he is relatively."

We have to exhibit the Christian this morning  
In the FAMILY.

Here it is supposed that he *has* a family. He is not a poor, illiberal, solitary individual; preferring vice, or mopishness, or an escape from expense, care, and trouble, to a state which was designed to complete the happiness of Adam in paradise; and which Inspiration has pronounced to be "honorable in all." He believes in the wisdom and veracity of God, who has said, "It is not good for man to be alone;" and instead of reflecting upon his parents, and undervaluing and injuring the most amiable part of society, where too they are not even allowed to complain; he forms no leading permanent plan of life, in which marriage is not considered as the foundation. And having entered the condition, he will be anxious to fulfil its duties. He will love his wife, even as himself. He will train up his children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He will behave towards his servants, as one who knows that he has "a Master in heaven," and that there is no respect of persons with God. He will say, with David, "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Oh! when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.—I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not come nigh me!"

"Then David returned to bless his household." *Then*—for the period and the occasion are previously marked. The day had been a very pleasing one to David; but it had proved a very active and busy one too. For many hours he had been engaged in bringing up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of Jerusalem. He had not only attended, to witness all the indications of piety and joy; but had contributed himself, in the sacred performances. And when the symbol of the Divine presence was set in the Tabernacle prepared to receive it; he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord; and dismissed the multitude with presents, after blessing them in the name of the Lord. But the monarch does not make him forget the master; nor does public service hinder domestic. "Then David returned to bless his household."—Let us pass from this instance of excellency, to consider at large,

I. THE WAY IN WHICH THE HEAD OF A FAMILY MAY BLESS HIS HOUSEHOLD.

II. TO SHOW THE REASONS WHICH SHOULD ENGAGE HIM TO ATTEMPT IT.

III. TO ANSWER SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE DUTY.

And,

IV. TO CONCLUDE WITH SOME ANIMADVERSIONS AND ADMONITIONS RESPECTING IT.

I. If it be asked, how the head of a family may BLESS HIS HOUSEHOLD? we would answer, by *Example*—by *Government*—by *Discipline*—by *Instruction*—by *Attendance on the Means of Grace*—by the *Performance of Domestic Devotion*.

Some of these particulars, we are aware, in a degree imply and include each other; yet they are distinct enough for the utility of separate remark. Thus we distinguish countries and provinces; though in some places they approximate; and where they unite, the air, and the soil, and the produce will display resemblance and even sameness.

*First*, He may "bless his household" by *Example*. I begin with this, because nothing can supply the want of personal religion. He who despises his own soul, will feel little disposition to attend to the souls of others. Destitute of principle, he will be determined only by circumstances; and his exertions, if he makes any, will be partial and rare.—Having nothing to animate him from experience, his endeavors will be dull and cold. Where all is merely formal and official, a man will not go far even in the use of means; but what probability is there of his success, when he *does* use them? Who loves to take his meat from a leperous hand? A drunkard will make a poor preacher of sobriety to servants. A proud and passionate father is a wretched recommender of humility and meekness to his children. What those who are under his care, see, will more than counteract what they hear; and all his efforts will be rejected with the question—"Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?"—To what is it owing, that the offspring of many professors are worse than those of other men? Inconsistency. Inconsistency is more injurious than neglect. The one may be resolved into a forgetfulness of principle; the other shows a contempt of it.

You little imagine how early and how effectively, children remark things. They notice them when they seem incapable of any distinct observation; and while you would suppose no impression could be left on such soft materials, a fixed turn is given to many a part of the future character. You must therefore reverence them, and be circumspect even in your most free and relaxing moments. You must do, as well as teach; and while you are humble before God, you must be able to say to them, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

It is commonly observed, that example does more than precept. But the young are peculiarly alive to example; and when example has the advantage of nearness and constant exhibition, and unites both authority and endearment, it must prove the most powerful and insensible transformer; and requires in those who furnish it, and who will necessarily be imitated, that they "abstain from all appearance of evil." We only add here, that they who constitute your moral charge, are not so much affected and swayed by any direct and positive urgings, as by the presence, and exemplification, and sight of "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." The force of the hothouse is not to be compared with the genial influence of the spring, by which, without violence, and without noise, every thing is drawn into bud and bloom.



*Secondly*, He may "bless his household" by *Government*. Order is Heaven's first law. God himself is the example of it; and by nothing does he bless his creatures more, than by the steadiness of the order of Nature, and the regularity of the seasons. What uncertainty is there in the ebbing and flowing of the tides? What deviations in the changes of the moon? The sun knoweth his going down, and his rising up. Even the comet is *not* eccentric: in traversing the boundlessness of space, he performs his revolutions of fifty or a hundred years, to a moment. And in all the works of God, what seems disorder, is only arrangement beyond our comprehension; for "in wisdom he has made them all."

Hear the Apostle. "Let every thing be done decently, and in order." The welfare of your household requires that you should observe times. Every thing should have its season—your businesses, your meals, your devotional exercises, your rising, and your rest. The periods for these will vary with the condition of families; but labor to be as punctual as circumstances will allow. It is of importance to peace and temper, and diligence, and economy. Confusion is friendly to every evil work. Disorder also multiplies disorder. For no one thinks of being exact with those, who set at naught all punctuality.

The same principle requires that you should keep every thing in its place. Subordination is the essence of all order and rule. Never suffer the distinctions of life to be broken down. All violations of this kind injure those who are below the gradation, as well as those above it. The relinquishment of authority may be as wrong as its excesses. He that is responsible for the duties of any relation, should claim its prerogatives and powers—how else is he to discharge them? Be kind and affable to servants; but let nothing divest you of the mistress. Be the tenderest of fathers; but *be* the father—and no sensible woman will, I am sure, be offended if I add—Be the most devoted of husbands, but *be* the husband.

*Thirdly, By Discipline.* This regards the treatment of offences: "For it must needs be that offences will come;" and what is to be done with them? Here are two extremes to be avoided. The one is severity. You are not to magnify trifles into serious evils; and instead of a cheerful countenance, to wear a gloom; and instead of commending, to be always finding fault; and instead of enlivening every thing around you like the weather in spring, to be a continual dropping in a rainy, winter-day. Instead of making home repulsive, let it possess every attraction, and abound with every indulgence and allowance the exclusions of Scripture do not forbid. Instead of making a child tremble and retreat, gain his confidence and love, and let him run into your arms. "Fathers," says the Apostle, (for this fault lies mostly with our sex,) "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged." The other is indulgence—a foolish fondness, or connivance at things actually wrong, or pregnant with evil. This often shows itself with regard to favorites. And here ye mothers, let not *your* good be evil spoken of. Do not smother your darlings to death with kisses; and let not your tender bosom be an asylum for delinquents appealing from the *deserved* censures of the father. The success of such appeals, with kind but weak minds, is very mischievous; it makes preferences where there should be an evenness of regard, and tends to check and discourage wholesome reproof; and "he that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Here Eli failed: "his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Here also David erred; he had not displeased Adonijah, at any time in saying, "Why hast thou done so?" When the head of a family cannot prevent the introduction of improper books; the visits of infidel or profane companions; the indulgence of ensnaring usages, and indecent discourse; the putting forth of pretensions above his rank; the incurring of expenses beyond his income;—does *he* bear rule in his own house? Is it thus that *he* puts away evil from his tabernacle? Is it thus that *he* blesses his household?

For what is Abraham commended? "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the ways of the Lord to do justice and judgment." Not that he was a tyrant; and terrified his family with the blackness of his frown, or the roughness of his voice. We no more admire a despot in the house, than in the state: but he was decided and firm; not only telling his servants and children what they were to avoid or what they were to perform; but requiring and enforcing obedience by the authority of his station. But *proper* authority requires dignity, as well as power. What can *he* do, whose levities, and follies, and ignorance, and weakness, deprive him of all awe, and all influence, and all impression?—Are we to smile or sigh at the thought of some children being in subjection to *their* parents; and of some wives being called upon to reverence *their* husbands? Is there no law to protect females and children?—As to children, the case with them is not voluntary; they deserve pity. But no sympathy is due to females who throw themselves into the empire of folly and weakness; and willingly choose a condition, whose duties it is sinful for them to neglect, and impossible for them to perform.

*Fourthly, By Instruction.* "For the soul to be without knowledge, it is not good." And this holds supremely true of religious knowledge. Hear the address of Moses: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Here observe not only the duty, but the manner in which he has enjoined the performance of it. He would make it a constant, a familiar, an easy, a pleasing exercise—a recreation rather than a task. In another place he says,— "When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bond-men in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God as he hath commanded us." Nothing can be more natural than this recommendation. The curiosity of children is great, and will commonly, if judiciously treated, furnish you with sufficient opportunities to inform them. Their questions will show you the bias of their disposition, the state of their minds, and the nature and degree of the information it is proper to administer; and in various

cases, it is less necessary to go before them, than to follow. Events too are always turning up; and these will afford a wise parent a thousand hints of natural and seasonable improvement. Yet there are those who though they levy a tax upon every thing their avarice, sagacity, and zeal can find, to promote the temporal interests of their offspring, never seize, and turn to a religious account, any of those occurrences of the day, and of the neighborhood, whether pleasing or awful, that might so easily be made to speak not only to the understanding, but to the imagination and the heart.

*Fifthly, By securing their attendance on the Means of Grace.* Servants should be allowed opportunities of public worship and instruction, as often as circumstances will permit; and we admire the plan of our forefathers, who disengaged their domestics as much as possible on the Sabbath from the preparations of the table, that they might be at liberty to go themselves, and get food for their souls. Children also should be led to the house of God—though there is a proper time for their “shewing unto Israel.”—In determining this, it is not easy to draw the line. If they are taken too early, besides hindering the attention of those who have the charge of them, there is danger that holy exercises will become irksome by frequent and long detentions, before they can feel any interest in them. Yet an early attendance is valuable, as it tends to render the habit natural; and impressions may be occasionally made, even upon infant minds, sufficient to lead them to inquire, and to aid you much in your endeavors to instruct them at home.

*Lastly, By Domestic Devotion.* This service ought to be performed every morning and evening. It includes prayer. Prayer is not only to be made for your family—though this is a duty, and a privilege, and enables you to obtain for your household a thousand blessings; but also *with* them. It takes in also reading the Scriptures. Mr. Henry goes further: “They,” says he, “who daily pray in their houses do well; they that not only pray, but read the Scriptures, do better; but they do best of all, who not only pray, and read the Scriptures, but—sing the praises of God.” This exercise is very enlivening, and tends to throw off the formality which adheres perhaps more to domestic worship than either to public or private devotion, as it allows of less variety. If singing be not practicable, a psalm or hymn may be read. It will often produce a good effect, by impressing the minds of servants and children. The whole of the service will help you in performing what we have previously recommended, the duty of teaching and admonishing your families. The psalm or hymn will furnish them with sentiments and sentences. The reading of the word will store their minds with facts and doctrine.—While the prayer itself will be no inconsiderable instructor. The very engagement will remind them of the presence and agency of God. Your addressing him for pardon, will convince them of guilt; your interceding for your country, will teach them patriotism; for your enemies, forgiveness of injuries; for all mankind, universal benevolence.—Thus a man may bless his household.—Let us consider,

## II. THE REASONS WHICH SHOULD ENGAGE HIM TO ATTEMPT IT.

For this purpose, let us view Domestic Religion.

*First, In reference to God.* To Him it has—a relation of *responsibility*. We are required to glorify God in every condition we occupy; in every capacity we possess. A poor man is required to serve him; but if he becomes rich, his duty is varied and enlarged; and from the hour of his requiring wealth, he will be judged by the laws of affluence. A sin-

gle man is required to serve God as an individual only; but if he enters into connected life, he must serve God as the head of a family, and will be judged by the duties arising from his household relation. God has given him a talent, and he is to make use of that talent. He has committed to him a trust, and he is to be faithful to that trust. He has made him a steward, and he is to give account of his stewardship. “I assigned you,” will God say, “the empire of a family. To qualify you for the office, I furnished you with authority, and influence, and resources. How have you employed them? Where are the servants and children you were to have trained up for me?”

—A relation of *gratitude*. How much dost thou owe to his kindness and care! Who crowned the wish of thy heart, in granting thee the object of thy dearest choice? Behold thy wife, like a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house; and thy children, like “olive plants round about thy table.” Who has supplied not only all thy personal, but all thy relative wants? Whose secret has been upon thy tabernacle? Whose providence has blessed the labor of thy hand? Whose vigilance has suffered no evil to befall thee, and no plague to come nigh thy dwelling? And wilt thou refuse to serve him, with a family which *He* has formed, and secured, and sustained, and indulged? And wilt thou, instead of making thy house the temple of his praise, render it the grave of his mercies!

—A relation of *dependence*. Can you dispense with God in your family? What are all your schemes, all your exertions, all your expectations, without him? “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.—It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep.” How wise is it then to secure the favor of one, who has all things under his control, and is able to make them all work together for your good, or conspire to your destruction. And has he not bound himself by promise and by threatening? “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just.”—What may not be dreaded from the curse of the Almighty? What may not be expected from his blessing? Under the one, the evils of life become intolerable; we sow much, and bring home little; we earn wages to put it into a bag with holes; our table becomes a snare; our successes gender many foolish and hurtful lusts; our prosperity destroys us. Under the other, a little is better than the riches of many wicked; our trials are alleviated; our sorrows are tokens for good; our comforts are enjoyed with a relish others never taste; the voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.—Therefore,

*Secondly, View it in reference to yourselves.*—You ought to be concerned chiefly for your *spiritual* welfare; and should value things as they tend to restrain you from sin, and excite you to holiness.—If this maxim cannot be denied, let us judge by this rule—the man who performs this duty, and—the man who neglects it. Can he give way to swearing and falsehood, who is going to hear *from* God, and to speak to him? Can he throw himself into a fury, who is just going to hold intercourse with the source of peace and love? Must he not guard his temper and conduct, even on the principle of consistency? The other exonerates himself from the reproach of hypocrisy; and because he makes no pretensions to duty, thinks he is justified in living as he pleases.—And this it is that restrains many from adopting the practice. They think that it would embarrass them; that it would abridge their liberty; that it would fix upon them the charge of inconsistency. And so



far they think justly. But here is their folly; in viewing a freedom from moral motives and restraints as a privilege! and an obligation to urge them to what is right and beneficial in itself, as an hardship and complaint!

And the practice is not only right, but every way profitable. While you teach, you learn: while you do good, you are gaining good. Your mind will be tranquilized by a confidence in God, which you alone are justified in reposing, and which you alone can repose in Him. How much does your comfort depend on the dutifulness of those that are under you! But how can you look for morality without piety? It is by teaching them to regard God, that you must teach them to regard yourselves, and to be diligent and submissive in their places. It is thus you bind them by sanctions the most powerful, and which operate in your absence as well as when you are nigh. It is thus you are not only obeyed, but regarded and honored. Religion, when it is consistently exemplified, always inspires respect and reverence. But what hold have the irreligious on the homage of others? So true it is even here, "They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." View it,

*Thirdly*, In reference to the *Family*. By how many ties ought the members of your household to be endeared! "And we *do* love them." But where-in does your love appear? Can you imagine that it only requires you to ask what shall they eat, and what shall they drink, and wherewithal shall they be clothed? What is the body to the soul? What is time to eternity? Do you wish to do them good? Can any good equal that godliness which is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come?

Were you to suffer your children to go naked, to perish with hunger; were you to leave them in sickness to die alone; you would be shunned as monsters. But you are far more deserving of execration, if you infamously disregard their spiritual and everlasting welfare. Doubtless Herod was viewed with horror by those who had witnessed the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem: but he was far less cruel than some of you. He slew the children of others; you destroy your own. He only killed the body; you destroy both body and soul in hell. Had you any real love to your children, what would be your feelings in life to see them going astray, and verifying, by the evils of their conduct, that the way of transgressors is hard—while conscious that you have done nothing to secure them from it! But what, at death, would you think of a meeting that must take place between you and your children, in the great day! Then they will rise up against you in the judgment, and cause you to be put to death. "Cursed be the day of my birth! Why died I not from the womb? Why was I not as a hidden untimely birth, as infants that never see light? Thou father, and thou mother, the instruments of my being—to you I am under no obligations. You only consulted your barbarous inclinations—you gave me an existence over which you watched while I could not be guilty; but merclessly abandoned me as soon as I became responsible: as the creature of a day, you provided for me; but as an immortal, you left me—you made me—to perish. I execrate your cruelty. I call for damnation upon your heads—and the only relief of the misery to which you have consigned me is, that I can reproach and torment you for ever!"

From such a dreadful scene, how delightful is it to think what a happy meeting there will be between those who have blessed their households and the favored subjects of their pious care! Yea, without going forward to this period of mutual and happy acknowledgment, what a joy unspeakable and full

of glory must such benefactors feel even now, when they hear a servant saying, "Blessed be God for the hour I entered such a family. I was as ignorant and careless as a heathen—but there the eyes of my understanding were opened, there my feet were turned into the path of peace." Or when they hear a child confessing, "O what a privilege that I was born of such parents! How early did they teach me to know the Holy Scriptures! How soon they led me to the throne of grace: and, by teaching me to pray, furnished me with the best privilege of life! How patiently they watched, and how tenderly they cherished, and how wisely they directed, every pious sentiment and every holy purpose!—And,

"As a bird each fond endearment tries,  
To tempt her new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
They tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

It is thus their children rise up and call them blessed!—Let us view it,

*Fourthly*, In reference to *Visitants and Guests*. These, instead of inducing you to decline the practice, should furnish you with an argument in support of it. Wo be it to you, if you shrink back from the duty in compliment to the rich, the infidel, the irreligious, or the dissipated—should such ever be found beneath your roof! For "he that is ashamed of me and of my words," says the Saviour, "of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the clouds of heaven, with the holy angels."

It is not by concealing your principles, but by owning them verbally and practically, that you must be useful to others, and gain their respect. And here you have an opportunity to confess Him before men; and without going out of your way to effect it. It cannot appear to be sought after, to give offence. It comes, in the regular course of your household arrangement. And nothing is more likely, without effort and without officiousness, to awaken attention; to inform; to admonish. The preacher remembers well the acknowledgment of a man now with God. He moved in superior life; and from his rank and talents, and extensive and various acquaintance, was likely to have persons frequently at his house who were strangers to his religious economy. He said his manner was, when the time of domestic service arrived, to inform them that he was always accustomed to worship God with his family: if they disliked the practice, they might remain; if they chose to attend, they might accompany him into the library. He said he had never known any that refused; and many of them owned they were much struck with the propriety and usefulness of the usage, and resolved on their return to adopt it themselves. The lecturer has also known several individuals himself, whose religious course commenced during a visit to a family who thus honored God, and were thus honored by him. It is recorded, I believe, of Sir Thomas Abney, that even when he was lord mayor, and on the evening of the feast, he told the company that he always maintained the worship of God in his house; that he was now withdrawing for the purpose, and should presently return. There are few professors of religion who could have done this. They would not have had consciousness enough of their claim to confidence in their integrity. But where the thing was known to be, not the pretence or show of extraordinary sanctity, but the steady and uniform operation of principle; not an exception from common conduct, but, fine as it was, only a fair specimen of the whole piece; this noble resolution must have produced some impression even in such an assembly. Observe it,

*Fifthly*, In reference to the *Country*. None of us

should live to ourselves. Every one should be concerned to benefit and improve a community in which he has enjoyed so many advantages. But we know that "righteousness exalteth a nation," and that "sin is a reproach to any people." What an enemy then are you, if irreligious, to a country that deserves so much at your hands. However loyally you may talk, you contribute to its danger and disgrace, not only by your personal transgressions, but by sending out into the midst of it so much moral contagion, so many unprincipled and vicious individuals from your own family. And how much would you befriend it were you to fear God yourselves; and to send forth those from under your care, who will serve their generation according to his will; and induce Him to say, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it." Who can imagine the good even *one* of these individuals may effect, by his prayers, his examples, his influence, his exhortations? What a blessing did Elkanah and Hannah prove to Israel by their training up such a child as Samuel! And what gratitude do all ages owe to his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, for such a character as Timothy!

*Finally*, Let us regard it in reference to the Church. Baxter thinks that if family religion was fully discharged, the preaching of the word would not long remain the general instrument of conversion. Without being answerable for the extent of this observation, we know who hath said, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." We know that among our earlier godly ancestors, religion was a kind of heir-loom, that passed by descent; and instead of the fathers were the children. Families were then the nurseries of the churches; and those who were early "planted in the house of the Lord flourished in the courts of our God, and still brought forth fruit in old age." Even the ministers of the sanctuary were commonly derived from hence; and these domestic seminaries prepared them to enter the more public institutions. And what well defined and consistent characters did they display—and what just notions did they entertain of divine truth—and how superior were they to those teachers who, brought up in ignorance, and after a profligate course, are suddenly converted; who, impressed before they are informed, are always in danger of extremes or eccentricities! who hold no doctrine in its just bearings, but are carried away disproportionately by some one truth, which first caught their attention; and who often continue crude and incoherent in their notions, and illiberal and condemnatory in their sentiments, through life! They were not always making discoveries, but "continued in the things which they had learned, and been assured of, knowing of whom they had learned them." They were enlightened, but not dazzled. They were refreshed with divine truth, but not intoxicated. They staggered not, but kept on steady in their course; neither turned to the right hand nor to the left. They were not Antinomians; they were not legalists. None could honor the grace of God more; but they never abused it.

Not only therefore would the Churches of Christ be more filled, but better filled: and though our eye is not evil, because God is good, and so far from wishing to limit the Holy One of Israel, we rejoice in the conversion of any: we reckon, and not without much observation, that the best members and the best ministers of our churches—they who in their conduct and in their preaching most *adorn* the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, are those who are brought from pious families.

III. We were to ANSWER SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE PRACTICE.

But I have been hesitating whether I should pass

over this division of our subject; not only because we perceive that we must trespass on your time, but because objections can be raised easily against any doctrine, or practice. The weakest reasoners most frequently advance them; and no wise ones will ever be influenced by them. They will look at argument and proof; and if a principle be established by sufficient evidence, they are satisfied, even if there should be difficulties which they must leave unsolved. I will however glance at four or five things.

The *first* regards *Leisure*. "We are so much engaged, that our affairs leave us no time for these exercises." But what time do they require? And is there one of you that does not waste more time every day of his life than is expended in such devotions? And if more time be really necessary, could you not gain more? How do you manage your concerns? Could nothing be saved by more diligence and order? At what time do you rise? Could nothing be saved from late slumberings on the bed, without any injury to health; yea, with the likelihood of improving it? If time falls short for any thing, should it not fall short for things of less moment? Is not the serving of God the "one thing needful?" And cannot He, by his grace and providence, more than indemnify you for every sacrifice you make? Is there not truth in the proverb, "There is nothing got by stealing, or lost by praying?" Are you more employed than David was, who presided in his council, and gave audience to ambassadors, and orders to generals—who reigned over an extensive and distracted empire? Yet he found time for domestic worship; and even on a day of peculiar activity "returned to bless his household."

The *second* regards *Capacity*. "We envy those who are qualified for such a work; but we are unable to perform it, as we wish—and as we ought." This is perhaps the only instance in which you think and speak humbly of yourselves. But we will not accept of your voluntary humility, till we have obtained from you an answer to a few inquiries. Is it not the want of inclination you feel, rather than of ability? Have you ever fairly made the trial? Have you done every thing in your power to gain a fitness for the duty? Would not your capacity increase by exercise? Is refinement here necessary? Is not the most imperfect performance preferable to neglect? Suppose you were to do nothing more than, after reading a portion of God's word, to kneel down with your household, and address our Father who is in heaven in the words which the Saviour himself taught his own disciples? Are there not helps to Family Devotion of which you may avail yourselves? We prefer in this service free prayer to forms; but preference is not exclusion. We love not the contempt with which forms have been treated by some. A Baxter, a Howe, a Watts, a Doddridge, did not ridicule them as "crutches." But, admitting the justness of the depreciating figure, yet surely crutches are a help and a blessing to the lame: and we know who hath said, "Where there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."

The *third* regards *Shame*. "We are ashamed to begin!" What! ashamed of your glory? Ashamed of following the great? Ashamed of following a David—a King—who "returned to bless his household?" Of following a Joshua; a hero; a commander; the first man in the commonwealth of Israel; who said, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" Of following Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and who made it their first care, wherever they came, to build an altar for God? Was his late majesty ashamed always to worship G



with his household morning and evening? Is there not an increasing number of persons in our own day, of high rank and nobility, who keep up, even in their establishments, a custom so laudable and useful? The shame is that you have neglected it so long, not that you are willing to begin it now. Follow the example of a man who was well known to some of us, but whose name we must suppress. He had heard the minister preach in the morning of the Sabbath on Family Worship. The very same evening he called together his wife, and children, and servants, and apprentices; and recapitulated the arguments and motives they had heard, appealed to their reason and conscience whether they were not unanswerable and irresistible. He then said, I condemn myself for the neglect of this duty, in which I have hitherto lived: but as the best proof of repentance is practice, I will now commence it; and, by the help of God, I will omit it no more, as long as I live. Was this weakness? or moral heroism?

The fourth regards *false or mistaken Orthodoxy*. God forbid we should undervalue divine truth; but there is a highness in doctrine so commonly connected with lowness of conduct, that we have known not a few, whose creed has soon led to the abandonment of family worship; and it is indeed the natural tendency, not of the principles they abuse, but of their abuse of the principles.—“The Lord knoweth them that are his. And he will call them in his own due time; and make them willing in the day of his power, without our anxiety.” But we are not sure of this. Our exertions may be the very means which he has appointed by which to accomplish the end. And when does He work without means? He gives the increase; but Paul plants, and Apollos waters—and what right have we to ask for a moral miracle, by expecting the one without the other?

“Where is the use of it? We cannot give our servants and our children grace.” And why not? “If,” says James, “a man err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.” Here it is supposed that *you* may save and convert. “Yes, but not meritoriously or efficiently.” How then? “Why only instrumentally.” We have no objection to this. Still it seems there is a sense in which *you* may do it. “Yes, under God.” This again is right. We never wish to exclude him. But he *is* with us: and by prayer we secure his assistance.

There is indeed a sense in which you cannot give grace; it is as to the success of means. But for this you are not responsible. This is the Lord’s part. But what is yours? Think of another case. The husbandman cannot raise an ear of corn; but he can manure the land, and plough, and sow. And he knows this is indispensable to a crop. And how rarely does he labor in vain! If God promises to communicate his blessing in the use of means, they who refuse them have no right to complain; and they who employ them, have no reason to be discouraged.

Another.—But I will answer no more of your objections. You *know* they are excuses. You *know* they are such as you will be ashamed to urge before the Judge of all. You know that your consciences are not satisfied with them even *now*.—I will therefore, in the

#### IV. Place, conclude with some ANIMADVERSIONS AND ADMONITIONS.

And “to whom,” as says the Prophet, “shall I speak and give warning?”

I must first address those who at present *are unconnected in life*.—How powerfully does our subject say to such, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” This will render the performance of family religion in all cases difficult, and in many, impossible. It is lamentable enough with regard to pious individuals themselves, that while they want every kind of encouragement and assistance, they are allied to those who, instead of helping them, must oppose and injure: but it is also to be deplored, as producing partially or wholly the ruin of domestic godliness. When Peter enforces relative duties, he admits that unless we dwell “as heirs together of the grace of life,” our “prayers will be hindered.” How can they rule well their own house? How can they seek a godly seed, while, instead of striving together, they thus draw different ways? and, alas! the one drawing heavenward is the least likely to be successful; the opposite attractions falling in with the depravity of human nature? For evil wants only to be seen or heard; but good must be enforced with “line upon line, and precept upon precept.”

But there are those who are already in family alliance, *who are living in the neglect of family devotion*. And this is the case, I fear, with not a few. And yet you would be offended if you were called infidels—but according to the apostle you have no reason: “He that provideth not for his own, and especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is *worse* than an infidel.” Many of you attend regularly the public services of the sanctuary, and we love to see you in the courts of the Lord, and willing to hear his words. But if you gained good in the house of God, you would carry it away, and diffuse it in your own. Yet when you are followed home, there is no more appearance of religion in your habitations, than in the houses of heathens. Heathens! forgive me this wrong. We blaspheme you by the comparison. You had, not only your gods for the country, but your household gods: which you regarded as your defenders, and guardians, and comforters; and which nothing could induce you to give up or neglect.

What can I say more? He has threatened to pour out his fury upon the nations that know him not, and upon the families that call not upon his name. But I would rather work upon your ingenuousness, than upon your fears. God has revealed himself under a *domestic* relation, and calls himself “The God of all the families of the earth.” And will you refuse him in this endearing character? Will you rob yourselves and your families of your greatest mutual honor and blessedness? An angel, in his intercourse with this world, sees nothing so uninviting and dreary as a house, though rich as a mansion and splendid as a palace, devoid of the service and presence of God! But what so lovely, so attractive as the family altar, “garlanded by the social feelings,” and approached morning and evening by the high-priest of the domestic temple, and his train of worshippers? There the master’s authority is softened, and he feels respect for the servant who is kneeling at his side, and “free indeed.” There the servant’s submission is sweetened, and he loves, while he obeys, a master who is praying for his welfare. Here the father, worn down with the labor of the day, is cheered and refreshed. Here the anxious mother bushes her cares to rest. “If any thing in the day has been diverted from its course, now all finds its place, and glides along its wonted channel. If the relative affections have declined during the day, the evening service, like the dew of heaven, revives and enlivens them. If offences have come, they are easily forgiven, when all are asking for pardon for themselves. Every angry word, every wrong

emper, every petulant feeling, flies before the hal-  
lowing influence of social devotion."

I must address myself to those *who perform it*. I beseech you, brethren, "suffer the word of exhortation."—Beware of formality. God is a Spirit. He looketh to the heart.—Beware of tediousness and length. "Use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking." "God is in heaven, and thou upon the earth; therefore let thy words be few." God cannot be fatigued: but he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. Beware of lateness. When languor and drowsiness and listlessness prevail, you would bless your households more by suffering them to retire, than engaging them in services irksome to the performers, and insulting to the receiver. "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. But cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen."

I must not overlook those who *are living in religious families*. The lines have fallen to you in pleasant places; you have a goodly heritage. From how many snares are you secured! What opportunities of instruction and improvement do you possess! What pious excitements, and encouragements, and aids do you enjoy! But your responsibility grows with your advantages. To you much is given. From you much will be required. For "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." There may be wicked servants in religious families: such an one was Gehazi, who waited upon Elisha. And there may be wicked children in religious families: such an one was Ham, who called even Noah his father! But if you abuse or neglect your means and privileges, your guilt and your condemnation will be greater than those of Pagans. "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you."—"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God and ye yourselves shut out."

Finally, there are some who *reside in irreligious households*. You we sincerely pity. Whatever temporal advantages you enjoy, they can never compensate for your spiritual privations. How sad, and how awful, to see the Sabbath polluted, the house of God forsaken; every book read, but the Bible. To hear, instead of prayer, profane swearing, and the taking God's name in vain, instead of praise. Or, if no gross immoralities prevail, to witness, lying down and rising up, no acknowledgment of God; but a practical, if not verbal rejection of him; every thing really saying unto God, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Surely such a situation, since you have known God, or rather have been known of him, has not been the object of your choice. But you may have been providentially placed here. You have perhaps been called here, being a servant; or you have been called here being a child. Be mindful of your danger, and "watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." Look to him who preserved saints in Caesar's household, and Abijah in the family of Jeroboam, that he may secure you. You are much observed. Therefore walk circumspectly. Be harmless and blameless. And not only be without rebuke, but hold forth the word of life—not by stepping out of your sphere—not by talking, (though a

word fitly spoken, O how good is it?) but by your tempers, your behavior, your character.

And thus you may be the instruments of introducing religion where you ought to have found it. Not only have wives thus won their husbands without the word, but servants have removed prejudices from their masters and mistresses, and induced them to attend the gospel. And thus children have conveyed religion to those from whom they ought to have derived it. "Well," said a mother, one day, weeping—her daughter being proposed as a candidate for Christian communion—"I will resist no longer. How can I bear to see my dear child love and read the Scripture, while I never look into the Bible—To see her retire, and seek God, while I never pray—To see her going to the Lord's table, while his death is nothing to me." "Ah!" said she, to the minister who had called to inform her of her daughter's desire—wiping her eyes—"Yes, sir, I know she is right—and I am wrong. I have seen her firm under reproach, and patient under provocation, and cheerful in all her sufferings. When in her late illness she was looking for her dissolution, heaven stood in her face. O! that I was as fit to die! I ought to have taught her; but I am sure she has taught me. How can I bear to see her joining the Church of God, and leaving me behind—perhaps for ever!" From that hour she prayed in earnest, that the God of her child would be her God, and was soon seen walking in company with her in the way everlasting. Is this mere supposition? More than one eye in reading this allusion, will drop a testimony to the truth of it. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." May God bless us, and make us blessings! Amen.

#### LECTURE IV.

##### THE CHRISTIAN, IN THE CHURCH.

"*That thou mayest know, how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God.*"—1 TIM. iii. 15.

THE connections of life are many and various; and they have all their appropriate claims and advantages. Some of these relations are natural; some, civil; some, commercial; some, intellectual and literary. But the most important of all alliances are those of a religious quality. The bonds of these are not flesh and blood; but faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. These regard the spirit in man; and fall under the power of the world to come. All other connections have their sphere only in this life; but these aspire after "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." All other unions, however firm, or however tender, having answered the destinations of Providence, will be dissolved by death; but though Christians die, *they* are still related. The separation between them is only *temporary*; a period of re-union will assuredly and speedily arrive. Yea, it is only *partial*: even now—

"The saints below, and all the dead,  
But one communion make;  
All join in Christ their living head,  
And of his grace partake."

You are to view the Christian, this morning,  
In the Church.

In this state Timothy was when Paul addressed him in the words which we have chosen for our motto—"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God."—*Him*, it is true, he addressed as a minister; and his official station de-



manded a line of conduct becoming it. But every Christian has a place to fill, and a part to act, in the Church of God; and he needs to be informed and admonished concerning it. Let us,

I. Explain the CONDITION OUR SUBJECT SUPPOSES.

II. The OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO ENTER IT.

III. The DUTIES WHICH ARISE OUT OF IT.

I. The CONDITION OUR SUBJECT SUPPOSES.

Now when we speak of the Christian's being in the Church, it is necessary to observe two acceptations of the word in Scripture, as well as in common discourse.

It is sometimes used to comprise *all the redeemed and sanctified people of God*. These, in every age, in every country; under every dispensation, whether Patriarchal, Jewish, or Evangelical; all these, whether residing in earth, or in heaven; all these constitute one church. And of this we read, when it is said, "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." "We are come to the church of the first-born." "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." However distinguished from each other, all *real* Christians, "who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," belong to *this* church; and to be found in it, is an unspeakable privilege, and constitutes what we mean by "the communion of saints" in the Apostles' Creed—a mutual participation in all their work, honor, and blessedness. But it is not of *this* we now speak. This is the Church universal; and in this we are necessarily found, as soon as ever we are chosen, and called out of the world.

But the word much more frequently means a *particular community, or company of believers associated together for religious purposes*. This coincides with the language of the Nineteenth Article—"A church is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same." In conformity to this, we read of "the messengers," not of the Church—but "of the Churches"—not of the Church—but "the Churches which were in Christ." And thus we read of "the seven Churches which are in Asia;" of "the Churches which were in Galatia;" and of "the Churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria;" and what they were may be inferred from their "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and being multiplied."—Thus, too, we read of "the Church at Philippi," and "the Church at Colosse," and so of the rest.

In advancing further, nothing would be more easy than to furnish matter for dispute. My object, however, is not controversial, but practical. It does not require me to undertake the task of attempting to determine the particular form of a Christian Church, or the precise mode of administering divine ordinances in it; but only to show, that it is the duty of a Christian to be found in a Church-state; giving up himself not only to the Lord, but to his people by the will of God; and walking with those who profess to continue steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.

Yet there are some who have here, we will not call them their arguments, but their excuses. To such union, they prefer rambling, or at least detachment. They fix no where, or at least commune no where. No church is wide enough, or strict enough, or pure enough, or sound enough—for them; no one is completely modified to their taste.

Constantine said to such a self-conceited Christian, "Take a ladder, and climb to heaven by thyself."—If all were like-minded with some, there would be no such thing as a church on earth.

I am aware of what I shall incur from certain quarters; but I shall deliver myself with the firmness of conviction. It is not necessary that we should approve of every opinion or usage among those with whom we connect ourselves. It is far better in lesser matters, if we have faith, to have it to ourselves before God; and to exercise forbearance and self-denial, rather than for the sake of some trifling difference, to endeavor to originate a new party, or remain destitute of the benefits, and violating the obligations of social Christianity. We should guard against an *undue* attachment to any particular scheme of Church policy, when, though the abettors profess to be governed by the Scripture only, and consider every iota of their system as perfectly clear and binding; others, more numerous than themselves, and equally wise and good, and entitled to the leading of the Spirit of Truth, draw a very different conclusion from the same premises. Mr. Newton, speaking of the several systems under which, as so many banners, the different denominations of Christians are ranged, observes, "That there is usually something left out, which ought to have been taken in, and something admitted of supposed advantage, unauthorized by the Scripture standard. A Bible-Christian, therefore, will see much to approve in a *variety* of forms and parties; the providence of God may lead and fix him in a more immediate connection with some *one* of them; but his spirit and affection will not be confined within these *narrow* enclosures. He insensibly borrows and unites that which is excellent in *each*, perhaps without knowing how far he agrees with them, because he finds all in the written word." With regard to myself, though I have a preference, and attach *comparative* importance to the things wherein pious men differ, yet there is no body of Christians, holding the Head, with whom I could not hold communion; and to whom I would not join myself, if circumstances withheld me from my own denomination, rather than remain a religious *solitaire*.\*

It will be, I presume, committing an unpardonable sin with bigots, when I express my persuasion, after all I have read of the claims, whether Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Independent, to the *only* Scriptural standard, that there is no *very* definite plan of Church government laid down in the New Testament; so that while one mode is canonized, every other is absolutely wrong. Deviation from prescribed orders is sinful; but where there is no law, there is no transgression. "As oft," says the Apostle, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Now had he told us *how* often we are to do this, we must observe such times only, or oppose the will of God. Is it so now the thing is left undecided? May there not be a difference in the frequency of its observance, without sin? It is otherwise with the recurrence of the Sabbath; this is determined both by command and example. It would have been criminal in Moses not to have made the snuffers of pure gold; or the holy oil of a mixture of certain ingredients; or the priest's robe of such a quality,

\* A Scriptural constitution of the church of Christ, is believed to be more clearly revealed, and of more practical importance, than would seem to be recognized by our excellent author. See a Review of these Lectures in the American Baptist Magazine, Vol. IX. January and February Numbers. Also, James' Church Member's Guide, Chap. I. On the Nature of a Christian Church.

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such a color, and such a length; for he had express instructions to do so, and the pattern of every thing was shown him in the Mount. But in what mount has our model of circumstantial regulation been exhibited? What Moses received it? Where do we find a particularity of detail in the gospels of the Evangelists; or in the Acts, and Epistles of the Apostles? Where do we find many of the materials of angry debate and exclusiveness which have occupied so much time, and spoiled so much temper, in the system of Christianity?—A system designed for every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue—a system too sublime in its aim to lose itself in minuteness—too anxious to unite its followers in great matters, to magnify little ones—too truly noble, not to be condescending—too tender, not to be tolerant—too impartial, not to say to its subjects, receive one another as Christ also has received you; you that are strong, bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please yourselves.

Now we do not pretend to say, that all who do not thus enter a Christian church, are not in a state of grace. Some, after they are converted, may not have the opportunity. Some are repulsed by the rigidity of admission; they cannot pronounce every Shibboleth of a confession; or express their belief of the divinity of every part of the discipline. These are to be pitied: the *blame* lies with the exactors of such righteousness. Some, otherwise disposed to come forward, are held back by a sense of unworthiness, or a dread of hypocrisy, or a fear of causing "the way of truth to be evil spoken of," by their acting unbecoming the gospel. These are to be instructed and encouraged.

But after these concessions, we make no scruple to say, that if a Christian does not belong to a Christian church, he is not walking according to God's appointment, and the order of the gospel; but is living in the loss of privilege, and the omission of duty. It was not thus with the Christians of whom we have accounts in the New Testament. They are represented not as wandering sheep, but a flock having a shepherd and a fold. Not as stones loose and scattered on the ground, but built up a spiritual house. Not as separate and solitary plants and trees, but as a vineyard, a garden watched and watered. Not as rovers and vagrants, in the highways and hedges—but as "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." This brings us to consider,

## II. THE OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO ENTER THIS STATE.

Let us notice four articles—*Suitability—Consolation—Safety—and Usefulness.*

The first claim is derived from *Suitability*. This state accords with the very constitution of man. He is not only a rational, but a social creature: and so natural are his social feelings, that they can only be rooted up with his very being. Religion therefore does not aim to destroy or injure those propensities; but it sanctifies them. It opens a new sphere for their development. It presents new objects of interest and attachment.

Like attracts like; and when we become godly, our longing is for godly association. Then we pray, "Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto them that love thy name;" then, we confess, "I am a companion of them that fear thee:" then, "we take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you;" then, we "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." These fall in with our new views, and hopes, and fears, and joys, and sorrows. These are now our fellow-learners fellow-travellers fellow-laborers, fellow-

warriors—yea, whosoever now doeth the will of our Father who is in heaven, the same is our brother and sister and mother.

Saul, therefore, upon his conversion, assayed to join himself to the disciples: and every one, when he falls under the same influence, will be like-minded with him. It would be strange, indeed, if when we turn away from the vain and the wicked, we should find ourselves in a state of destitution and abandonment. But God has expressly provided against this repulsion of loneliness. We do not become outcasts. He takes us up. "Wherefore," says he, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a father unto you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Ye shall not be homeless and friendless. I will place you in my family. You shall have better relations than those you have resigned; and more valuable connections than those who have renounced you. When you part with the world, you enter the church, and this is more glorious than all the mountains of prey. You rise in rank; and so far from being losers, "Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."—We therefore

Derive the second claim from *Consolation*. This is the law of Christ: as we "have opportunity, let us do good unto all men; but especially unto them that are of the household of faith." Their members, therefore, have the first claim upon a Christian church for sympathy and succor. And the privilege arising from hence will appear to be the greater, when it is considered, that the discharge of this duty does not depend upon obligation only. Christians feel themselves disposed, as well as bound to this good work. Their principles lead them "to rejoice with them that do rejoice," and to "weep with them that weep." And is it nothing to belong to a community, who, instead of envying and hating you for your successes, and endowments, and comforts—it is so always with the world—will glorify God on your behalf? Is it nothing to be connected with those who feel it to be their duty and their privilege to guard your reputation, to explore your wants, to soften your cares, to soothe your sorrows; and where, not only the minister and the office-bearers, but all the members, will visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and comfort them that are cast down?

The poor and the needy are too generally overlooked, not to say despised, by the world; and from the treatment they receive from others, there is danger of their feeling a kind of self-degradation that makes them regardless of their conduct. But here they have a name and a place. Here they feel an importance, that while it raises them morally, does not injure them in their civil dependence. Here their elevation does not draw them off from their stations; but improves them for every relative duty, by producing self-respect, and augmenting a sense of responsibility. Here their fellow-members, above them in condition, can without envy or uneasiness see their equality with themselves, or even their pre-eminence, in experience. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."

The church is the only society in which it is either possible or proper to merge the ranks of life. Temporal things divide men, and keep them sepa-



rate; and they have always a tendency to carry to excess those distinctions which are allowable, and even necessary. However disposed towards each other, the small and the great cannot unite in secular friendship. The master and the servant cannot consort together either in the upper or the lower room. The peasant and the nobleman cannot inhabit the same cottage, or the same mansion.—The noble and the vulgar cannot feed together, either at the dinner of herbs, or at the stalled ox. But, here they all surround the same table. Here all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink. Here the rich and the poor meet together. Here all are partakers of the same common salvation. Here all are one in Christ Jesus. Here every disadvantage is compensated. "Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

*Safety* furnishes a third claim. For it is not to be overlooked that this state fortifies individuals against the influence of example, and number, and ridicule, and reproach. It will be allowed that a man ought to do what is right, if no one stands by him. Yet singularity is sometimes a great trial: and to brave all the consequences, in many cases, requires more moral heroism than is always possessed even by one that is upright and sincere. But when he stands in connection with others; when he sees himself countenanced and supported by those he deems wiser and better than himself; this gives him confidence and courage; and he resembles a soldier who advances boldly with his comrades, when he would hesitate and falter alone. "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him: and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

Indecision is as perilous as it is uncomfortable. And therefore the apostle says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." For while the enemy sees you unfixed and hesitating, he yet hopes to succeed, and this protracts his endeavors; whereas when he finds you determined, he desponds, and departs. How many temptations are cut off, as soon as we cease to halt between two opinions, and proclaim ourselves to be on the Lord's side. And how much circumspection is also hereby induced. He who makes no pretences to a thing, is not judged by it; but a profession of religion is of great value, as it tends to check what is evil, and to bind us to what is righteous, by subjecting us to self-reproach and the censure of others, when we act inconsistently. "Does this temper or conduct become a member of the church of Christ? Do I wear his livery, and disown him? Have I opened my mouth to the Lord, and can I go back? Are not the eyes of many upon me? And have they not a right to ask, What do ye more than others?"

And let me put it to your conscience, whether this be not one of the reasons which operate to keep you out of the church. Ye feel yourselves now in a larger place. You have more liberty. You can do your own ways, and find your own pleasures, and speak your own words, on God's holy day. Your tongues are your own: who is Lord over you? And—"I do not profess to be a saint," seems an excuse to prevent or silence all

the qualms of the sinner. "I know not," says Doddridge, "a more dreadful mark of destruction upon a man, than a fear to be under an obligation to avoid what is evil, and to cleave to that which is good." A man properly concerned for his spiritual and everlasting welfare, would feel every assistance, every excitement, every motive, in such an important course, a privilege; and such a privilege constitutes a powerful argument on behalf of a church relation.

Therefore it has a fourth claim. It is *Usefulness*. How much more is a man's zeal drawn forth as soon as he has declared himself in any cause; and he partakes of the spirit of the party. When his vote is solicited for a candidate at the time of an election, though he feels scarcely a preference before, yet as soon as he has avowed himself for either of the applicants, his indifference is destroyed, his fervor is excited, and he is carried along with the proceedings, until he is intensely interested; and his happiness or misery seems suspended on the success. Indeed, whatever we keep concealed within, is likely to lose some of its hold upon us: it is by speaking of it, by pushing it forward, by acting constantly upon it, that we feel more of its impression and influence.

But there is another view to be taken of the subject. We all know how much is to be done by union, even when the parts are inconsiderable in themselves. Thus sands make the mountains. The cable that holds the ship in the storm is composed of threads. A single soldier that has missed his way, may chance-wise do some little good; but he is efficient only as acting with a corps; and the war requires an army. If the liberal soul *deviseth* liberal things, how are good schemes to be carried *into effect*, and how are useful institutions to be *supported*, but by union and co-operation? How much often does *one* Christian society accomplish by its collective wisdom, and benevolence, and exertion! Why are the Churches called candlesticks, but because they are instruments holding forth and diffusing the light of life?

The public worship of God ought always to be considered as an unspeakable benefit to mankind. Amidst the cares and toils and distresses of life, "God is known in his palaces for a refuge." He is "the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow, in his holy habitation." There the tempted are succored; and the weak strengthened; and the wandering directed. The sanctuary opens a door for the weary traveller to enter and refresh himself. It awakens, by its administrations, the curiosity of the thoughtful and the attention of the careless; and how often have those who came from no pious motive, been known of all, judged of all, and compelled to exclaim, God is in the midst of them of a truth! While we are anxious for more success to attend the means of grace, we are not aware of the extent and the degree in which they are useful. What an injury would be sustained in a neighborhood, if they were given up!

But it is by *Churches* that the ministry of the word and the ordinances of religion are supported and dispensed; and by their means the system of conversion and edification is continued and perpetuated. Individuals die: but thus, as some are removed others are added. Thus member succeeds member, and pastor succeeds pastor; and, as in the case of a river, change leaves sameness, and permanency is produced by succession. But we have,

### III. To consider THE DUTIES ARISING FROM THE STATE.

These are various as well as important. They relate,

First, To the *Worship*. This a Christian will

value as the appointment of Him, who knowing what is in man, ordains what is necessary to him, and delights in the prosperity of his servants.—When, therefore, he says, “Seek ye my face,” his heart answers, “Thy face, Lord, will I seek.” And as he obeys from love, he will never exclaim—“What a weariness is it to serve the Lord; when will the Sabbath be gone!” He calls the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord, honorable. He loves the habitation of his house. He finds his word and eats it; and it is to him the joy and the rejoicing of his heart. If others can dispense with ordinances, he never rises above his need of them. He feels that something is still wanting to his knowledge, his graces, his comfort; and though he holds communion with God habitually, and wishes in all his ways to acknowledge him, he sees what an adaptation there is in the means of grace to afford him relief and assistance. His own experience stimulates him—for he has seen his power and glory in the sanctuary; while the promise justifies his most enlarged expectation—“In all places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

Cases of prevention will sometimes occur; but he will take heed that they are not excuses. And, as he would not love and serve the creature more than the Creator, he will see that the hinderances are such as would keep him from all other engagements. And if they can be removed by order and skill and diligence in his affairs, or by a little expense in conveyance, saved from vanity and excess; he will remove them. And when the sick relation, or his own bed of languishing, or the painful accident, detains him at home, he will feel himself the prisoner of the Lord, and say, with the royal exile, “When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday.” I never believe those who, turning their backs upon the temple, tell us that they pass their time in retired devotion. One duty pleads for another, and prepares for another, and helps another. It is the same with neglect: we may infer one omission from another. It is very questionable, too, when they tell us that the preacher can teach them no more than they know already. It is the remark of an old writer, that “he who will learn of none but himself, is sure to have a fool for his master.” Besides, novelty of information is not the only or principal object in attending the house of God, but, as Judge Hale said, with regard to himself, “to be impressed and affected; and to have old and known truth reduced to experience and practice.”

He therefore regards the means of grace *constantly*. He attends not one part of the Sabbath only, but both parts: and surely two public services cannot be too much for a day dedicated to devotion. Nor will he attend on the Sabbath only, but on the week-day also. He will be thankful for a service which refreshes and nerves his mind amidst the cares and toils of his calling; and he will remember that, as a professor of religion, he has stipulated for his regular attendance, by his joining the church to which he belongs. Nothing can be more painful to the feelings of a minister, when he comes to water his flock, than to find many of them not at the well. Perhaps, too, he has chosen his subject, and studied it, and prayed over it with a peculiar reference to the individual then absent. And how often has something been delivered in the absence of that individual, singularly appropriate to his condition or experience; something that might have directed and

comforted him to the end of life, and have been remembered in death with pleasure. And thus neglect has been punished with regret.

But you are required to attend the means of divine appointment *spiritually*. Ye are not to think it enough to draw nigh to Him with the mouth, and honor him with the lip, while the heart is far from him. The Lord looketh to the heart. There is such a thing as an attendance on ordinances, when there is no attention in them; at least none that comes up to the demand, to “worship in spirit and in truth.”

And as Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase, we must attend in *humbleness* of mind, and never without *prayer*, that the Spirit may help our infirmities, and render the means available to our profit. When the preacher enters upon his work in such an assembly as this, “it is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.”—And

*Secondly*, These duties regard the *Minister*, who is placed over you in the Lord. Add not to his difficulties. He has his trials as a man; and he has his trials as a Christian; and in addition to both these, he has trials peculiar to his office. Could he have foreseen all at the beginning, he would have been disheartened at the entrance; but his work is like John’s little book, a bitter sweet, and the sweet comes first. You find it hard enough to manage one temper; what must be the task of governing a multitude, including every diversity! After the engagement of years, he would yield to many a temptation to withdraw, but that necessity is laid upon him. Never successful according to his wishes, and sometimes apparently useless, he is often ready to lay down his commission at his Master’s feet, to say, “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain.” Bound to engage at the times appointed, and knowing what is expected from him, in his perplexity arising from choice of subjects, in his barrenness of thought, in his unfitness of feeling in the study which is a weariness to the flesh, and the exhaustion of spirits generated by intense application; his heart knoweth his own bitterness; death worketh in him, but life in you. Encourage him. Welcome his instructions. Yield to his reproofs. Respect that authority which he has received, not for destruction but edification. “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

A minister must be very mean-spirited if he regards his salary as alms or benefactions from his people. What they give, they more than have out in services; and “the laborer is worthy of his hire.” Has not God ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel? And is not this law founded in equity and justice? Would not the same talents the man devotes to the service of the sanctuary, provide for himself and his family, if employed in secular concerns? This is a delicate point for a minister to handle; and he surely would never bring it forward if he could do justice to the part of the subject before us without it. But he will resign it as soon as possible; and leave it in the words the Holy Ghost teacheth. Let congregations compare themselves with it; and especially those individuals in them who pay more annually to the most menial of their attendants, than to the shepherd of their souls; while others, with all their commendation, never confer upon him one token of respect in their lives.

“Let him,” says the Apostle, “be with you without fear.” And again: “Know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and ad-



monish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." He means not only in reward for their work, but in aid of it; for unless you *magnify* his office, you are not likely to be *impressed* by it; and as your regard for the preacher declines, so will your profit by him. Your relation to him is such, that, if he is degraded, you are disgraced in him; and if he is honored, you share in his respectability. Ministers are men; and "the best of men are but men at the best." You are not required to approve of their infirmities, or even to be ignorant of them: but surely you will not be suspicious; you will not invite or welcome reflection and insinuation; nor, like too many, speak of him, or suffer him to be spoken of, before children and servants and strangers, with a levity and freedom, far from being adapted to increase or preserve esteem and respect. You will consider his character not only as forming his crown, but as essential to his acceptance and success. "Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation."

*Thirdly*, These duties respect your *Fellow-Members*. They are all comprehended in love: and you are required to "love one another out of a pure heart fervently;" to "love as brethren." Has a fellow Christian erred? "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Has he been overtaken in a fault? "Ye that are spiritual, are to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourselves lest you also be tempted." Is he declining in zeal, and negligent in duty? You are "to consider him, to provoke him to love and to good works." Is he oppressed? You are to bear his "burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Is he in want? You are to give him such things as are needful. "Now," says the Apostle, "we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men."

*Fourthly*, Your duty concerns the welfare and prosperity of the *whole Interest*. Not that you are to be exclusively attentive to your *own* community. You are unfit to be a member of *any* Christian Church unless you can say, "grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." But our conditions and circumstances must regulate not the principle, but the exercises and the impressions of duty. The private affections are not incompatible with the public, but conduct to them; and the way, the best way, the only way, by which we can promote the good of the whole, is by advancing the good of a part. The man who, in opposing patriotism, pleads that the world is his country, and all mankind his fellow-citizens, has no country, no fellow-citizens. The object for which he pretends to be concerned is too indistinct to impress; too distant to approach; too extensive to grasp. To come nearer. If a man were to disregard his family, under pretence that he was acting on a broader, nobler principle, and for an object less selfish and contracted, even the nation at large; he would soon be told that the nation consists of families; that one of these is committed to his care; that this he *can* improve; that this he *ought* peculiarly to regard, even for the sake of the public. "He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." It is much the same here. It is the will of God that we feel a special sympathy with the religious society to which we belong. This demands our immediate attention, and efforts, and sacrifices; and all the members in their respective places and by all the influences they can employ, should seek to excel to the edifying of the Church.

Now the first thing that seems to strike us with regard to the prosperity of a cause is, the *increase* of its members. There is, however, one kind of accession which a Church should not value nor seek after. It is the drawing members from other churches, where they already hear "the truth as it is in Jesus," and enjoy the fellowship of the gospel. We do nothing in filling one place, by emptying another, where the same work is carrying on.—The transferring of soldiers from one regiment into another, does not increase the king's army, or add to the defence of the country. The thing is to gain fresh recruits. Our aim should be to make converts, not proselytes. But it is delightful when the inquiry is often made, What shall we do to be saved?—when sinners are turned from darkness unto light, and the power of Satan unto God: when Zion, surprised at the quality and number of her sons and daughters, exclaims, "who hath begotten me these? these, where have they been?"—and the Lord adds to the Church daily such as shall be saved.

But *harmony* is included in the welfare of a Church. It can only edify itself in love. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable; gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

It takes in also *purity*. "Therefore," says the Prophet, "keep peace and truth:" and, says the Apostle, "speaking the truth in love." The Church of Ephesus is commended for not bearing them that are evil. Our concern for the sanctity of our communion is to appear in maintaining godly discipline; in not admitting irreligious characters, whatever recommendations they may otherwise possess; and in excluding them when they discover themselves to be ungodly after they have been admitted.—Improper individuals will occasionally enter the Church: there is no preventing it, unless we were omniscient. But we cannot search the heart; and our leaning ought always to be on the side of charity: it is better to be mistaken and deceived, than to be suspicious and censorious, or to destroy one for whom Christ died. But when the mask under which the man entered is shifted aside, and his conduct appears sinful, "put away from among you," says the Scripture, "that wicked person." He disgraces you; and he will contaminate—"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Some Christians not only individually but collectively do not sufficiently think upon and pursue "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." A Church may be austere and harsh and forbidding: but much of its usefulness depends upon its amiableness. And this will arise from its character for benevolence, and public spirit, and liberality; and from its joining, with firmness of adherence to essential truth, latitude in things circumstantial; from its tenderness in receiving the weak, but not to doubtful disputations; from its readiness to receive all as Christ has received us, to the glory of God.

Towards this prosperity every member should aim and labor to contribute, by his prayers, his conversation, his example, his temper, his influence.—And a Church thus flourishing; increasing with all the increase of God, in number, and peace, and sanctity, and every moral excellency, is the noblest sight on earth; and full of attraction, and impression; and "a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men;" it looks forth as the morning, clear as the moon, bright as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Let us conclude.

*First*, We have been speaking of those that are

within. But there are some who are yet *without*, whose condition we lament, and to whom we therefore would address the language of inquiry and invitation, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why tarriest thou without?" And where do we find these? We find them among *you*, whose character and conduct are irreproachable, who constantly attend the preaching of the cross, who are glad when they say unto you, Let us go into the House of the Lord; who have even the worship of God in your families; and are not strangers to your closets—and yet keep aloof from the table of the Lord, where with his dying breath he is saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." We find them amongst those of you who so often remain as spectators at the holy solemnity, and looking down upon the privileged partakers, sigh and say, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"—yet are restrained from approaching, not by carnality but timidity; and by forgetting that "all the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of him." We find them among you, my young friends; you, who are shunning the paths of the destroyer; you, whose consciences are awake, whose hearts are tender, whose minds are impressed by divine things,—and who are detained by looking for a change too sudden and too sensible; and for a kind and degree of evidence and assurance by no means necessary.

People talk of the young, and seem to require more satisfaction with regard to them, than with regard to older candidates. But wherefore? Do persons grow more simple and open and undesigning as they advance in life? Who are the members by whom churches have been troubled and disgraced? Not those who joined themselves to the Lord young, and very young too. I never knew a minister who had to repent of encouraging such communicants. And how many youths have I known, who, humanly speaking, would have been excellent and useful characters now, but they were not encouraged, when, as our Saviour says, they were not far from the kingdom of God. Their foot was on the threshold of conversion; but no one took them by the hand, to draw them in—but there were enough ready to draw them back: the world laid hold of them: or their convictions, for want of cherishing, died away. Some of them are now sitting in the seat of the scornful: others, though not the victims of error and vice, are in a state of indifference with regard to the holy communion, which is likely to continue for life. Whereas, had they entered the Church when there was nothing to justify their refusal, they would have been decided; their return into the world would have been cut off; they would have felt identified with a peculiar people; their impressions would have been formed into principles and habits; and the whole man would have been changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

My young friends, hesitate, we beseech you, no longer. Fulfill ye our joy in verifying the promise, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

Then will your peace be as a river. You will gain all the succors your age and your condition require. You will become examples to others in the same period of life: and the young love to follow the young. Your usefulness, early commenced, will advance with your character, and influence, and years: and planted so soon in the house of the

Number 28.

Lord, you will flourish in the courts of our God, and bring forth fruit in old age.

Many of you are the children of religious parents. How are they now praying that my attempt to bring you to a decision may be effectual! See you not the tears now dropping from the cheek of thy father—thy mother—at thy side; while each says, "if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." Some of us can speak from experience. We only recommend what we have exemplified. We were enabled early to dedicate ourselves unto God; and we have found his yoke easy, and his burden light. We have found his ways pleasantness and peace. We have found "godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." And, next to the salvation of our souls, we daily praise him for an early conversion. "I bless thee, O God, for many things," says Beza in his will and testament, "but especially that I gave up myself to thee at the early age of sixteen."

Wait then no longer. Be encouraged by the assurance, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." If the flower be not blown, offer the bud—

"The flower, when offered in the bud,  
Is no mean sacrifice"

in his account. And through all the changes of life, and from the borders of the grave, he will honor this surrender, and say, "I remember thee the kindness of thy youth."

*Secondly*, We see that while Christianity expects us to enter the Church, it does not leave us to ourselves in it, but accompanies us with its social obligations, and requires us to be found in the performance of every part of relative duty. Unless you cultivate the principles and dispositions pertaining to the condition, you have no right to its benefits.—Unless you bring forth fruit in the vineyard, you are cumberers of the ground. If in the master's house, you are unprofitable, you are wicked servants. Here, as every where else in religion, privilege and duty go together. You had therefore better resign your connection with the Church, if you are blanks in it. How much more if you are blots! Your relation to the body of Christ stamps upon you a sacred character. It produces a responsibility peculiarly awful. As professors of his religion, you are witnesses for God; and you depose by your actions, as well as by your words—and will you bear a false, or a defective testimony? You are charged individually with a portion of the glory of the Redeemer; and will you not be concerned to carry it unsullied to the grave?

Beware, therefore, lest by any temper or carriage you should cause the adversaries of the Lord to blaspheme, and the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Do not sadden the heart, and slacken the hands of your minister. Do not prove a grief to the strong, and a stumbling-block to the weak among your brethren: but "make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Thus you will be harmless and blameless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a



crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

Even then, you may not escape censure and reproach. But you will not be buffeted for your faults; and therefore may take it patiently. Your enemies will find nothing whereof to accuse you, but in the law of your God. You will suffer for righteousness' sake, for well-doing, as Christians; and then you need not be ashamed, but rejoice that you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye also may rejoice with exceeding joy.

*Thirdly*, We may learn that while we are under obligation to make a profession of religion, and come to the table of communion, the Lord's Supper is not a passport to heaven; and a connection with a visible Church does not prove our belonging to the invisible. The form of godliness is becoming, and useful, and necessary, as the dress of godliness; but it is nothing, it is worse than nothing, as a substitute for the reality. For, in this case, there is the *utmost* familiarity with divine things; and this prevents, this destroys their impressiveness. The very position of the man screens conscience from alarm, while the terrors of the Lord are addressed to those that are *without*: and as, by his assumption of the character, he passes for a Christian, and is so treated by the world and by his brethren, and is so addressed and encouraged and comforted by the minister, he is in danger of taking it for granted that he is such—when the end of these things is death. "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" He may be discovered and exposed in life; and if not, his name and his place in the Church will soon avail him nothing. The privileges he has enjoyed, instead of affording him any security, will aggravate the awfulness of his condemnation. He not only perishes "from the way," but from the holy hill of Zion—from the sanctuary of God. He falls at the foot of the altar. He drops into hell, from the table of the Lord, and with the sacred symbols of his body and his blood in his hand and in his mouth. The house of God, in which he pretended to worship; the pew in which he trifled so many hours away, in hearing the word only; the pulpit, and the form of the man of God exerting himself in it: the chalice that never trembled in his unworthy hand—these will be the most dreadful images that will present themselves to the eye of his lost mind. The truths he professed to believe and recommend; the sacred exercises in which he engaged, with those who call on the name of the Lord; his favorite psalms and hymns in which he so often mocked him with "a solemn sound upon a thoughtless tongue;" his sitting to hear, and to judge of the qualifications of candidates; his joining with the Church in reproving, suspending, excommunicating other members with all the grimace of feigned sanctity and zeal—this will be the food of the worm that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched.

Yet in some cases, it would appear that the extent and the continuance of religious delusion may be as wonderful, as the detection will be tremendous. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say"—Not know us? Why, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast tarried in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and

Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."

"But, beloved, we hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." You are poor in spirit. You mourn for sin. You hunger and thirst after righteousness. You love his salvation, and you love his services. You glory in his cross, and you admire his character, and long to bear the image of the heavenly. Yet you are often ready to shrink back; you often, you always pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Well, be assured of this, that you are more welcome to his house, than you ever feel yourself to be unworthy. He himself rises up, and in all the freeness and tenderness of his love, invites you to his table; and cries, "Eat, O friends; drink you, drink abundantly, O beloved!"

And we, *fourthly*, conclude by hailing those who are not only members of a Christian Church, but are joined to the Lord, and are of one spirit with him. Not resting in the outward and visible sign, you realize the inward and spiritual grace. You discern the Lord's body; and, by the exercise of faith on the Sacrifice of the Cross, your experience tells you that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. You have a joy in divine things which mere professors and formalists know nothing of. How often, in his word and ordinances, do you sit under his shadow with delight, and find his fruit sweet to your taste. How often when lying down in green pastures, and feeding beside the still waters, do you exclaim, "Oh! how great is his beauty, and how great is his goodness." While the men of the world consider you as enslaved by superstition, you walk at liberty, because you keep his commandments. While they represent you as given up to dulness and melancholy, you can look them in the face, and say,

"The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below;  
And heavenly fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow.

"The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets."

Yes, you are already blessed. But what a prospect is before you! Death has been called a going home—but it is going to church—going from the church below to the Church above. Your communion on earth has its trials. It is a mixed state of things; and owing to the apostacies of some, and the backslidings of others, and the infirmities of all, you are often sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and the reproach of it is a burden. Yet it is a pleasing emblem, and earnest of the fellowship of heaven; but its defects, as well as its excellences, should lead you to aspire after that world were the Canaanite will be no more in the house of the Lord for ever; and where the spirits of just men are made perfect. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall

lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Ah! Christian, though you will soon change your place, you will not change your associates. When death lets you go, you will return to your own company. Now were you setting off for a country which you had never seen, would it not be very relieving to think that you would find yourself at home there—many of your connections being there already—and the rest assuredly coming after? If, Christian, you are at present a stranger to the heavenly world, the heavenly world is not a stranger to you. There is your Father. There is your Saviour. There are the angels who have been your ministering spirits. There are all the saints, your brethren in Christ. There are your dear friends and fellow-worshippers, who have preceded you—while those you leave behind are loosening and preparing to follow.

And can you imagine that your religious acquaintance will not be renewed, and your holy intimacies be completed, there? "I am fully persuaded," says Baxter, "that I shall love my friends in heaven, and therefore know them. And this principally binds me to them on earth. And if I thought I should never know them more, nor therefore love them after death, I should love them comparatively little, as I do all other transitory objects. But I now delight in conversing with them, as believing I shall commune with them for ever." Paul was like-minded. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy."

### LECTURE V.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN THE WORLD.

*"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world."*—JOHN xvii. 11.

ACCORDING to Isaiah, it is a privilege to "hear a word behind us, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when we turn to the right hand, and when we turn to the left." Truth and safety lie in the middle. The pilgrim, ascending the Hill Difficulty, saw a lion on the right hand, and a lion on the left; and was afraid to advance. But he was informed by a voice from above, that these lions were chained; and need only alarm those who approached the sides of the road. The middle was perfectly secure: and keeping in this, though these creatures might look and roar at him, they could not hurt. This is another instance of the profound truth, as well as genius, with which Bunyan describes things in his exquisitely simple and admired book. The wisest of men but gives us the same fact, when he represents Wisdom as saying, "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment." The sentiment may be exemplified in every thing moral and religious. Economy is equally remote from profusion and parsimony. Courage stands between rashness and fear. Patience is equally destroyed by feeling too little or too much: for which reason we are forbidden both to despise the chastening of the Lord, and to faint when we are rebuked of him. The evils to be avoided in all these cases come so near together, that "narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Let us take this general reflection, and apply it to a particular case. Our Lord said to his disciples—"I have chosen you out of the world." "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And they cannot remember and feel this too powerfully; not only when they assume a profession of religion, but in every stage of their subsequent progress.—

But though their inheritance is above, their residence is below. Though they are bound for glory, they are now strangers and pilgrims on earth.— Though they are not *of* the world, they are *in* it.— "I am no more," says the Saviour, "in the world, but *these are in the world.*"

They are in the world, in distinction *from heaven*. This is the final abode of the blessed; and this high and holy place is much more congenial with their views and feelings than the earth, where they are now left. In the natural creation, things are distinguished and separated according to their qualities; and the Apostle asks with regard to the Church—"What communion hath light with darkness; and what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Order, therefore, seems to require that as soon as men are converted, and bear the image of the heavenly, they should go to their own company; and not remain in "a world lying in wickedness." But were this to be the case, the triumph would be obtained without the fight; and the prize would be reached without running the race; conversion would be always the signal of dissolution; and religion would enter our families like an undertaker, to carry off our connections to the grave. But there is *a way*; and the *end* of this is peace; there is *a course*; and this is to be *finished* with joy. The Jews imagined they were to possess the land flowing with milk and honey as soon as they were delivered from the house of bondage; but the wilderness was their abode for forty years; and though this condition was far better than the place from whence they came out, it was not to be compared with their destination. "Ye are not yet come unto the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you."

They are in the world, in opposition to the requirements of *Superstition*. This degrading and perverting system very early prevailed, saying, touch not, taste not, handle not: forbidding also to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and honor the truth; and inducing the votaries, if not always by precept yet by commendation, to resign their secular callings, and recede from society, and live in cells and dens and caves of the earth—which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. But all this was really after the commandments and doctrines of men.—Christianity yields it no real countenance. This is not overcoming the world, but refusing the combat. This is not fighting but fleeing. This is putting the candle under a bushel instead of in a candlestick, where it can give light to all that are in the house. But, says the Saviour, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

They are in the world, in qualification of a mistake, to which some Christians even now are prone, and which, though it does not carry them into Popery, *withdraws* them, shall I say, *too much, or rather improperly, from the world*. For here we may err, not only in the article of conformity, but separation; not only in our indulgence, but in our mortification; not only in our love, but in our aversion. If we are the friends of the world, we are the enemies of God; yet we are to honor all men. If we shun the course of this world, we are not to neglect their welfare. While we decline the wicked as companions, we are to attend to them as patients, and endeavor to recover and save and bless them. The ground that at present does not yield us pleasure must furnish us with employment; that cultivating the barren and the briery soil, under the divine



agency, for us—in some few spots at least—the wilderness and the solitary place may be made glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. This brings us to the subject of our present meditation—**The Christian**

**In the WORLD.**

The theme would fill volumes; and we have only a single Lecture for the discussion of it. But let us do what we can. Let us take five views of the subject. Let us consider the Christian in the World, as

In a sphere of **ACTIVITY**.

In a sphere of **OBSERVATION**.

In a sphere of **ANGER**.

In a sphere of **SELF-IMPROVEMENT**.

In a sphere of **USEFULNESS**.

**I. In a sphere of ACTIVITY.**

God obviously intended us for a life of engagement; and the design is no less conducive to our own advantage individually, than to the welfare of the community in which we live. It is said, that in Turkey the Grand Seigneur himself must have been articulated to some mechanical trade. Paul had a learned education, yet he was taught the craft of tent-making; and we see of what importance it was to him in a particular emergency. The Jews proverbially said, that he who did not bring up his son to some employment, taught him to be a thief.—Bishop Sanderson said, that the two curses of the day in which he lived, were “beggary and shabby gentility.” Beggary is too well understood, and too much encouraged; but what his lordship very properly calls shabby gentility, means the pride of family, and the show of finery, and the expensiveness of indulgence, with insufficient means; while all aid derived from any kind of business is declined and contemned. Some, now in easy circumstances, meanly endeavor to conceal the merchandise or trade in which their parents were engaged—though it is pleasing to think the attempt is always vain; as the affectation of these people leads every one to ferret out the secret, and to exclaim, what a pity it is that any should possess property who are ashamed of the honorable way in which it was acquired for them! Of all pride, the most contemptible is that which blushes at trade; especially in a country whose greatness results so much from commerce; and “whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth.” They only ought to blush who rise in the morning, not knowing that they have any thing in the world to do, but to eat and drink, and trifle and sleep. An angel would pray for annihilation, rather than submit to such disgracefulness for a single day. Activity is the noblest life; it is the life of the soul. It is also the most pleasant, and most healthful. No drudgery equals the wretchedness of ennui. The idle know nothing of recreation. Peace and content flee from their feelings. Weakness, and depressed spirits, and trembling nerves, and foolish apprehensions, haunt them; so that these people seem referable to the physician, rather than to the divine.

But the thing has a moral bearing, and so comes under the notice of the Lecturer. A life of inaction is a disuse of talents, and a perversion of faculties, for which we are responsible. It is the inlet of temptation. Our leisure days are the enemy's busy ones—

“For Satan finds some mischief still,  
For idle hands to do.”

“Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom—pride, ‘fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness.’ When

was David overcome? Was it not when, instead of commanding his army in the field, he was indulging himself at noon, upon the house-top? Where grossness of vice is not produced, evils of a less odious quality, but no less anti-christian, are cherished, especially the indulgence of impertinent curiosity, and whisperings, and backbitings, and slanders. —“Withal they learn to be idle, wandering from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things they ought not.” What is the prevention of these vices, and a thousand more? Is the Apostle too severe? “When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.” Thus Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden—not to live as some of you do; but to dress and to keep it. All through the Old and New Testament you will find that those to whom God appeared, to communicate information, or bestow prerogative, were all engaged and following their occupations at the time. If the unemployed think that *he visits them*, let them suspect, and inquire whether it be not another being under disguise; for “even Satan also transformeth himself into an angel of light.”

Yet is it not sufficient that we are engaged. The Christian must appear in the man of business. He is not only to have a calling, but to “*abide with God* in his calling.”—To abide with him by the moderation of his desires and exertions: not entangling himself in the affairs of this life; diligent in business, but not, by multiplication and complexity, injuring the health of his body and the peace of his mind, and compelling himself, if not to omit, to curtail his religious duties; if not to neglect the Sabbath, and the sanctuary, and the closet, yet to render himself unable to attend on the Lord without distraction.—To abide with him by invariable conscientiousness; doing nothing but what is conformable with truth and rectitude: not content to keep himself within the precincts of legal obligation, but shunning and detesting in all his dealings, every thing that is mean and overreaching; and exemplifying every thing that is fair and honorable.—To abide with him by a devout temper and habit; that will remind him of the presence of God and his all-seeing eye; that will keep him from planning or achieving any enterprise without dependence upon Heaven; that will not allow him to say, “To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain;” while he knows not what shall be on the morrow; but induce him to preface every project with the pious acknowledgment, “If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that;” practically owning the agency of his providence in all the contingencies of his affairs; in every failure and disappointment submitting to his pleasure; in every favorable turn, in every degree of success, not sacrificing unto his own net, and burning incense unto his own drag, as if by them his pasture was made fat, and his meat plenteous; but ascribing all to the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it.

Thus secular life is christianized, and the bounds of religion enlarged far beyond the district of what we commonly mean by devotion. If the Christian could abide with God only in the express exercises of worship, whether in the closet, the family, or the temple, he could be with him very little. In all situations, the cares of life demand the vaster part of his time and attention; but he may always walk before the Lord in the land of the living; and whether

he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he may do all to the glory of God. Let him, as often as he has opportunity, repair for impression, refreshment, and aid, to the means of grace in private and public; but let him also remember, that making the word of God his principle, and the honor of God his aim, he is still serving God, while he is working with his own hands in his secular vocation, and providing things honest in the sight of all men. The spirit of devotion actuates him in the absence of its forms; and this principle, as is reported of the philosopher's stone, turns all it touches into gold.—Thus his natural actions become moral; his civil duties become religious; the field or the warehouse is holy ground; and the man of business is the "man of God."

## II. In the World he is in a sphere of OBSERVATION.

"Ye are the light of the world: a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." "Ye are manifestly the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men."—"We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." It is obvious from hence, that as religious characters, you ought not to be concealed; you will not be concealed; you cannot be concealed. Of this I fear you think too little. Did you sufficiently consider how many eyes are upon you, and the effects that may result from their inspection, you would surely pray, with David, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies;" or, as it is in the margin, "because of them that observe me."

In the Church you have observers. The minister who watches for you souls as one that must give an account; the office-bearers, all your fellow-members—all these observe you. But these are good observers, friendly observers: these observe you to consider you, in order to provoke you to love and to good works. But the world furnishes observers of a very different kind, both as to their qualities and their purposes—

Curious observers. For "you are men wondered at." They think it strange that you run not to the same excess of riot with them. They are amazed at your resigning dissipations, without which they cannot live; and yet profess to be happy; and to see you bear reproach and persecution; and rejoice that you are accounted worthy to suffer. They are staggered at your principles; and they are not perfectly satisfied with their own; and so resemble Felix, who wished to hear Paul concerning the faith in Christ: and the Jews, to whom the Apostle appealed when he came to Rome—"And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for, as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."

—Malignant observers. Your temper and conduct and pursuits throw censure upon them; and they hate you, because you testify that their deeds are evil. They therefore watch not to commend, but to condemn; not to notice the many good steps you take, but to mark the least halting; and are delighted when they can detect any thing to degrade you down to their level, any thing to justify their insinuations against you, any thing to make them better pleased with themselves, any thing that may help their faith in the hypocrisy of all religion.

—Unjust observers. It is proper enough for them to compare your conduct with your principles, and your practice with your profession: but they do more than this. For you do not profess to be perfect; yet by nothing less than this rule, do they af-

fect to try you. Yea, all irreligious as they are, they exalt themselves into moral censors, and exact more from you than even your religion exacts; for your religion will allow you to be sincere though you have infirmities; but they will not. Hence they magnify little failings into crimes. Hence they impute the improprieties of a few to the whole body. Hence, instead of judging of your religion by the Scripture, they judge of your religion by you. Hence they even estimate the leader by his followers, and the master himself by the disciple.

This is awful; and it shows what incalculable injury we may do when we walk unworthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. For as the poor Indians said of the Spaniards, what a God must he be, who has such hell-hounds for his servants and children: so what must many think of Christ, were they to judge of him by the folly and pride, and avarice and implacability of many who are called by his name?

And what inferences, my fellow-Christians, ought you to draw from hence? It is in vain to fret yourselves, and complain of the injustice of the world. You must regulate yourselves accordingly. Yea, you must turn this vile disposition into a blessing. You must walk in the fear of your God, because of the reproach of the heathen your enemies. You are not of the night nor of darkness: you must therefore walk honestly as in the day. You are on a stage: you must therefore be attentive to your movements. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" Never be careless of your reputation. Never adopt the maxim of some indiscreet professors—"I care not what the world thinks or says of me." You ought to care. You ought to value a good name above great riches. You ought to let no accusation attach to you, but in matters pertaining to the law of your God.

## III. In the World he is in a sphere of DANGER.

Our Lord reminds us of this, when he prays not that we might be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil. Hence we are required to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. And hence we read, "blessed is the man that feareth always."

We are liable to be drawn sometimes beyond the bounds of permission and duty: and so to intermingle with the ungodly as to neglect the command, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." There are companies, and places, and scenes, to which a Christian may be tempted, but in which he must never be found. We have read in ecclesiastical history of a damsel supposed to be possessed of the devil. The bishop approached her, and commanded the unclean spirit to come out of her. But he stoutly replied, "I will not;" adding, as the reason of his refusal, "she is my lawful prize. I took her on my own territory. I found her, not in the temple, but in the theatre." I have no faith in the fact: but the moral of the fable—how much of ecclesiastical history is no better than fable!—the moral is good and useful; and teaches us that we have no warrant to look for divine protection when we are on forbidden ground.

We must needs go out of the world, if we would avoid all intercourse with the ungodly. There is scarcely a day in which we are not brought into such contact with them as duty allows and requires. But is there no caution necessary even then? Is there no danger of infection, when we are among the diseased? Has not a heathen told us, that evil communications corrupt good manners? Need you be informed that even the presence of the wicked may chill your religious fer-



vor; and that their conversation may throw doubts into your minds, and leave stains on the imagination, which cannot be easily removed? How insensibly are we drawn to feel and talk and act like others; especially if there be rank to impress, and talent to fascinate, and friendship to allure, and dependence to excite hope, and favors to attach gratitude!

The danger as to the case before us is, not only from what we meet with in the condition, but from what we bring into it. The world is always the same. Its errors, vices, examples, endeavors, frowns, smiles, promises, and threatenings, yield incessant and powerful temptations. Yet an angel is not endangered by them; he has not the senses, the passions, the appetites, the corruptions, on which they can operate. But we are not only rational but animal creatures. We have not only an immaterial spirit, but a material body accessible to every external impression. We are also fallen creatures, and much of the derangement induced by our depravity consists in the ascendancy of the sensual over the intellectual part of our nature.

And if we are sanctified, we are not completely renewed. And owing to the sin that dwelleth in us, we are in danger from our dress, our food, our calling, our connections. We are in danger not only from sinful, but lawful things. The piece of ground, the yoke of oxen, the married wife—all these are innocent in themselves; yet they may excuse the acceptance of the invitation to the feast, and become the means of perdition. The knowledge we possess may puff us up with vanity. The applause we meet with, may show how drossy we are; for as the firing-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is man to his praise. Owing to our susceptibility of shame and suffering, the fear of man bringeth a snare, and may drive us back or turn us aside from the path of duty. How perilous is it to have not only an active and sleepless enemy without, but a traitor within, to give him every information and advantage. And with regard to the soul, a man's foes are indeed those of his own household. "Then a man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." How apprehensive and cautious should those be who carry gunpowder, while moving in the neighborhood of sparks. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?"

Be not therefore high-minded, but fear. Some are indeed obliged by their condition and calling to enter further into the world than others; and so are more exposed; but what we say unto one, we say unto all, Watch. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Whose attainments are such as to warrant the dismissal, or even the relaxation of his vigilance? Whose standing is so secure as to feel it needless any longer to pray, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe?" Are we young? Timothy with all his faith and godliness, is admonished to flee youthful lusts. Are years beyond the reach of harm? Solomon, after a youth of manhood and piety, is drawn aside in his old age. We may fail even in those qualities and graces wherein we most excel. Abraham, the father of the faithful, staggered through unbelief; and how did it debase him in Gerar! Moses, more meek than any man on the earth, provoked by the perverseness of the murmurers, "spake unadvisedly with his lips." The disciple who disowned the Saviour, even with oaths and curses, was he who had just said, "though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee;" and who had just drawn his sword, and in the presence of a number of Roman soldiers had cut off the ear of the High-Priest's servant. If any imagine that though these admonitions and warnings are needful

for others, they are not necessary for *him*, he is the man who far more than every other requires them for "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

It is therefore a great thing, and a thing for which you ought to be thankful to the God of all grace, if, after so long an exposure in an enemy's land, your hearts have not turned back, neither have your steps declined from his ways. Review the hour when you first gave up your yourselves to the Lord and to his people by his will; recall the subsequent vicissitudes of your condition and experience; and exclaim with wonder and praise,

"Many years have passed since then;  
Many changes I have seen;  
Yet have been upheld till now—  
Who could hold me up but Thou?"

You have had your infirmities; and these ought to humble you. But it is an unspeakable privilege that thus far you have not only been sincere, but without offence; and have not caused the way of truth to be evil spoken of.

"Ah!" say some of you, "such are to be congratulated. Through all the pollutions of a world like this, they have not defiled their garments; and they are ready to walk with their Redeemer in white, for they are worthy. But we are only commencing our religious course. Their warfare may be considered as accomplished: our fight is scarcely begun. The dangers which are behind them, are all before us; and the prospect frequently smites our heart down to the ground." But be not discouraged. Their friend and keeper is with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Look to that grace which is sufficient for you; and be concerned to abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace will sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your body, soul, and spirit may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

IV. In the World he is in a sphere of SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him. His love to them is infinite. And as he is possessed of unbounded resources to give his friendship effect, it follows that he would not detain them here, unless the condition was compatible with their advantage, and the trials by which they are exercised could be found unto their praise, and glory, and honor.

When Isaiah would distinguish the guilt of a sinner, he said, "Even in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly"—and nothing can aggravate a man's wickedness more, than to go on still in his transgressions, when every thing in his situation, every thing he hears and sees, excites and encourages him to godliness. By the same principle of reasoning it will appear, that the highest religious excellence is that which is displayed in the land of wickedness; and where evil examples and seductions press on every side. Hence the portrait drawn by the sublimest hand that ever held a pencil.

— "Abdiel faithful found  
Among the faithless, faithful only he;  
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:  
Nor number, nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind  
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd  
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd  
Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught."

This gave splendor to the faith of those Christians who were saints even in Cæsar's household. This magnified the sanctity of Daniel, and Moses, and Joseph, who lived in the midst of heathenish, and luxurious, and corrupt courts; and yet kept themselves pure. This was the honor of Noah; that when God had explored the whole world, he said, "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

What is virtue untested? "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." It is not by the fire-side, or in the circle of his friends, or in the rear of the army with the "staff," that the hero gathers his laurels; but amidst the confused noise of warriors, and garments rolled in blood. If we were exposed to no frowns and menaces, how could we show the firmness of our religious principles? If we met with no kind of reproach and persecution for the Saviour's sake, how could we evince our belief of his truth and our love to his cause? Were we urged to follow no will but his, how could we obey God rather than man?

Am I offended? What an opportunity have I to prove that I can forgive my brother his trespasses! Am I opposed and injured? Here my patience and meekness are called forth. Here I am in the noblest field of action. I am more than a conqueror. I am not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Can I pass a day or an hour, and not perceive the goodness and forbearance of that God, who, though still insulted by the world which he has made, yet spares it, and is never weary in filling it with plenteousness?—Is my soul vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked? and do I not wonder at the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came into such a world, and resided here for three and thirty years, bearing the contradiction of sinners against himself?—Can I view the depravity of others, and know that I am a partaker of the very same nature, and not feel abased and ashamed, like the martyr, who whenever he saw a sinner in his sins, said "There goes Bradford, but for the grace of God." How can we view the vassalage of the ungodly under the tyranny of their passions, and led captive by the devil at his will, and not remember that we ourselves also were sometimes foolish and disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures; and not ask who made us to differ from others; and what have we that we have not received?—How can we see the vileness of sin in its ugly tempers and detestable practices, and not be excited to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good? How can we contemplate the miseries of the sinner, and not have our faith confirmed in the testimony of the Scripture that assures us the end of these things is death; the way of transgressors is hard; there is no peace to the wicked? And when we behold them blind and deaf, madly rushing on to destruction, will not all the compassion of our souls be moved—will not all our zeal be inflamed—to endeavor to save them?

#### V. In the World he is in a sphere of USEFULNESS.

We principally mean religious usefulness. We would not indeed limit your exertions. Do all the good that is in your power. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, administer to the sick, visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction—But forget not, that charity to the soul is the soul of charity. There is no evil from which you can deliver a fellow-creature to be compared with sin; and there is no good you can obtain for him like that grace whose fruit is holiness, and whose end is everlasting life.

And fix in your minds, my Christian friends, not only the importance of the object, but the possibility of accomplishing it. David did not despair of success when he said, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." And what says the Apostle James? "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." God works by means; and it is by his people that he principally carries on his cause in the world. They are his witnesses. They are his servants. He first makes them the subjects of his grace, and then the mediums. He first turns them from rebels into friends, and then employs them to go and beseech others to be reconciled unto God. For they know the wretchedness of a state of alienation from him. They know the blessedness of a return.—They have "tasted that the Lord is gracious."—Their own experience gives them earnestness and confidence in saying to those around them, "O taste, and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

Let us enter more fully into this most essential part of our subject.

The persons for whom you are to be concerned are represented as *without*; and your object is to bring them in. They are ignorant, and you must inform them. They are prejudiced, and you must remove their objections. They are full of aversion, and you must subdue this dislike. The Scripture calls this "gaining" them; "winning" them. In order to this, address is necessary, as well as zeal: "He that winneth souls is wise." Hence the Apostle requires you to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without." The question is, what this wisdom includes. Here I wish I had more time to enlarge and particularize. I know nothing concerning which the conduct of many religious people needs more correction. I will therefore venture to exceed a little the limits allotted to this exercise; though, after all, we can only throw out a few hints for your observance.

If then you would bring in those that are without—Show nothing like a contemptuous superiority or distance. Avoid every air of the Pharisee, who says, "Stand by thyself; come not near me; I am holier than thou." Convince them that you love them, and have no object in view but their own welfare. And therefore be kind, and tender, and ready to serve them. Especially be attentive to them in trouble; for nothing affects persons more deeply, than the notice you take of them in distress. It will look disinterested; and will not fail to form in their minds a striking contrast between you and the people of the world, and lead them to say, "How these people differ from others! Other friends drop us in adversity; but then these take us up. They are not meanly governed by advantage; but love their neighbors as themselves."

—Learn to distinguish things that differ. What fisherman would employ the same bait for every kind of fish, and at every season of the year? Who, wishing to convince, would seize the moment of passion and irritation; and not wait the return of calmness and reason? Who, having to reprove, would not administer the rebuke privately, rather than mortify and exasperate by public exposure?—"Tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."—How different are the conditions, the habits, the principles, the tempers of men! And who was it that said, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification?" And did not his own example enforce his advice? "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto



all, that I might gain the more." "And this I do for the gospel's sake." "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

—Never begin in a way of attack. This puts you into the posture of an enemy, and provokes a feeling of defence and resistance. Recommend what is right, rather than oppose what is wrong; and let them, by the perception of the one, discover and condemn the other. The best way of effecting the expulsion of evil, is by the introduction of good.—What is it to tear people away from their amusements, before any superior source of pleasure be opened to their minds? Their hearts are still after their idols. They only act the hypocrite in their abstinence; and hate the religion that forbids their happiness. Let something better be substituted; and the soul is even as a weaned child.

—And do not attempt every thing at once.—"There is," says Henry, "not only an undoing but an overdoing; and such an overdoing, as sometimes proves an undoing." When the disciples of John asked our Saviour, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" He said unto them, "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.—Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Now what you have here to consider, is, not so much the imagery of the comparisons, as the principle. His meaning is, that some things, proper in themselves, are yet not seasonable; and that we may do hurt rather than good, by endeavoring to effect too much. Look to his life for an illustration of his doctrine. Did he despise the day of small things? Did he break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? Did not he say to his disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now?" How unlike him are they who force upon the mind every difficult sentiment, regardless of any preparation made by experience for the reception of it. "How unwise," as an old writer has it, "is the conduct of those who send their pupils to the university of predestination, before they have entered the grammar-school of repentance." How injurious is it, when the tenderness of age requires only milk, to feed babes with strong meat,—yea, and even to furnish them with the bones of controversy.

—Do not attach great importance to little things. This is the way to make people think that your religion consists of whims or trifles; and that your integrity and firmness are but squeamishness and obstinacy. Show that though you have a tender conscience, you have not a weak one. Show that your convictions are not opinions, but principles.—Show that your object is not to make proselytes to your party, but converts to the cause of real Christianity.

—Beware of every thing in your conduct that would prove a scandal. They who see, can get over stumbling-blocks; but who would throw them in the way of the blind? "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Administer no cause of censure but what your religion itself supplies. You are not answerable for the offence of the Cross. But there are many other offences—and wo to the world because of them! The falls of professors are judgments on the neighborhood in which they live. What a noble spirit dictated the

resolution, "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." And how far did Ezra carry the delicacy of his religious zeal! There was no real inconsistency between dependence upon God, and the use of means; but he had to deal with a poor ignorant heathen, who might easily misapprehend and pervert the language of his confidence; and therefore, says he, "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted, and besought our God for this; and he was entreated of us."

—While your religion is impressive by its consistency, let it be attractive by its amiableness.—Therefore, think upon and pursue whatsoever things are lovely, and of good report. In excuse for the disagreeable tempers and the repulsive manners of some Christians, it is said, that grace may be sometimes grafted on a crab-stock. Be it so.—But instead of excusing the improprieties, the metaphor condemns. When a tree is grafted, it is always expected to bear fruit according to the scion, and not according to the stock: and "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

—Nothing recommends godliness more than cheerfulness. All men desire happiness; and if while every other candidate for the prize fails, you succeed, your success may determine others to follow your envied course. Hence it is not very desirable that religion should be so often expressed by the word seriousness. Among many people, as soon as ever a man is becoming religious, it is said he is becoming "serious." But does not religion also make him humble, and benevolent, and hopeful, and blessed? Why then should we select so exclusively for the designation of its influence, an attribute or an effect which is common with many others, but yet the least inviting, and most liable to an injurious construction? I never use it—and if I were obliged to use any other term than religious itself, I would rather say the man was becoming happy.

It will be allowed that many of these advices are of a negative kind. But there are many ways in which you may positively exert yourselves. Such as—By conversation. By epistolary correspondence. By recommending good books. By bringing persons under the preaching of the word; for "faith cometh by hearing." As soon as Andrew knew the Lord, "he findeth his own brother Simon, and saith to him, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ; and he brought him to Jesus." As soon as Philip knew him, he findeth his friend Nathaniel, and saith unto him, "we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write." As soon as the woman of Samaria knew him, "she left her water-pot, and went into the city, and saith to her neighbors, come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did." And how many was she the instrument of inducing to believe on the Saviour of the world!

The opportunities and influences of individuals will be very unequal; but all should seek to obtain the commendation conferred on Mary in the gospel, "She hath done what she could."

Yet it is not always by direct effort, that you will best succeed. A word fitly spoken is valuable; but in general, it is better for persons to see your religion than to hear it: it is better to hold forth the

word of truth, in your lives, rather than in your language; and by your tempers, rather than by your tongues. The relations in which some pious characters are found peculiarly require the observance of this distinction. Such, for instance, are professing servants. *Their* province of usefulness is not by teaching and exhorting and reproving. One of these was recently speaking to the preacher of her master and mistress, and complained, "Nothing I say to them seems to do them any good." To whom—knowing the *class* of the individual, he replied—"What you *say* to them! But this is not the way in which *you* are to expect to do them good—but by early rising; by neatness, and order, and diligence; by 'not answering again; by not purloining, but showing all good fidelity;' it is thus that you are to 'adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.'" I am far from ranking wives with servants and dependants. My female hearers, you will bear me witness that I never plead for the degradation of your sex; and I am sure you will not count me your enemy because I tell you the truth. We need not remind you of the language of the Apostle; "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp an authority over the man; but to be in silence." He can only speak comparatively. We know you are well endowed with speech; and we delight to hear your readiness and skill. But we yet question whether any talent, even of this kind, be your most advantageous and successful instrument. The love of home; the concern to please; the silent tear; the graceful sacrifice; the willing concession; the placid temper—these upon men—and we presume you would not have married brutes—these upon ingenuous and attached husbands, will seldom fail of producing their effect, really if not instantly. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." There is no eloquence so powerful as the address of a holy and consistent life. It shames the accusers. It puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men. It constrains them, by the good works which they behold, to glorify God in the day of visitation.

—We hope there is no Cain here this morning, who in answer to all this is ready to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" From this obligation to seek the salvation of others, *none* are exempted. But if some are more peculiarly bound than others, they are those who have been saved from a long and awful course of vice themselves. *You* ought to feel, above others, a claim of gratitude, and of justice. You have had much forgiven, and you should love much. You have been a curse to many; you ought now to be a blessing. Oh! it seems enough to make you shed tears of blood to think that there are some now in hell who ascribe their destruction to you: while others are walking the downward road, urged on and encouraged by your former errors and crimes and influence. Some of these are placed beyond your reach. Others are yet accessible. O! repair to them immediately. They know your former condition; describe to them your present; and acquaint them with the peace and pleasure which have resulted from your conversion. Who can tell what an affectionate and earnest testimony, derived from experience, and accompanied with a change too obvious to be denied, may accomplish?

—But "them that honor me," says God, "I will honor." Let all your attempts therefore be preceded and attended and followed by prayer. This will prepare you for your work; this will encourage you in it. This will preserve you from growing weary in well-doing. This will teach you not to consider any of your fellow-creatures as abandoned; this will keep you from giving over the use of means to reclaim them. Nothing is too hard for the Lord; and prayer brings *him* into the scene; we are workers together with God—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

—And need I say, "whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might;" do it immediately? While you delay, *they* may be gone, and their condition determined for ever. While you linger, *you* may be gone, and every possibility of usefulness be shut out. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Yet all your opportunities of doing good are limited to this short and equally uncertain duration. In consequence of this, what an inestimable value attaches to the present hour. Awake, my fellow-Christians, and redeem the time. Remember, earth has one privilege above heaven. It is the privilege of BENEFICENCE. The privilege of passing by a transgression, of relieving the distressed, of spreading the Scriptures, of evangelizing the heathens, of instructing the ignorant, of reclaiming the vicious, of seeking and saving them that are lost. They who are now in joy and felicity, would be ready, were it the will of God, to descend from their glory, and re-enter the body, and traverse the vale of tears again, to be able to do, for a number of years, what at present lies within the reach of every one of you. Is this incredible? They are now perfect in knowledge; and see that "it is not the will of our Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Their benevolence is now perfect; they dwell in love, and God dwelleth in them. They are filled with the Spirit of Him who "though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that he through his poverty might be rich."

Christians! we have thus spoken of your being in the world. Let me now speak of your leaving it. After David had served his generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep, and was gathered to his fathers. Jesus went about doing good; but at last he said, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "And now I am no more in the world. Holy Father, I come to thee." Such is the removal that awaits you all. You will soon be no more in this world—how soon, it is impossible to determine. But as to some of you, from the infirmities of nature and the course of years, the event cannot be very remote, and you need not—you do not deplore it. "Your salvation is now nearer than when you believed." "The night is far spent. The day is at hand."

You are not required to be indifferent to what is passing around you, or insensible to the events that befall yourselves; but you are to feel as Christians; and you are to declare plainly you seek a country. You are not to undervalue a state in which you enjoy many comforts, and are favored with the means of grace, and are blessed and dignified with opportunities of usefulness; but considered as your portion, and your dwelling-place, the voice cries, and you ought to hear it, "Arise, and depart hence, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted." You are not to be in haste to leave it while God has any thing for you to do, or to suffer: but while bearing the burden and heat of the day, you may resemble the man in harvest: he does not throw down his implements and run out of the field before the



time; but he occasionally erects himself and looks westward, to see when the descending sun will furnish him with an honorable discharge.

"Jesus," the Evangelist tells us, "knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father." There was something peculiar here. He *knew* the time of his departure, and had his eye upon it, and regulated his measures by it from the beginning—But you must say with Isaac, "I know not the day of my death." Yet you also have *your hour* appointed for this purpose; and appointed by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. And till it arrives, you are immortal; and friends cannot retard, and enemies cannot accelerate its approach.

—And what will it then be but a departure out of this world? This vain world—this vexing world—this defiling world—this tempting world—this world which crucified the Lord of Glory—this world in which you walk by faith, and not by sight; and in which you so often exclaim, "Wo is me, that I dwell in Mesech, and make my tents in Kedar."

—What will it be but a departure out of this world to the Father?—To his world? To his abode?

—And to yours also? For since you are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, your going to the Father, is going home. The poet represents the traveller returning at eve, buried in the drifted snow, as "stung with the thoughts of home;" a home he was not permitted to see. But, Christian, no disaster shall hinder your arriving at your Father's house in peace. And as your home is sure, so it is replenished with every attraction that can draw you forward. When the venerable Mede, whose grey hairs were a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness, was asked how he was—resting upon his staff, he cheerfully answered—"Why going home as fast as I can; as every honest man ought to do when his day's work is done; and I bless God, I have a good home to go to." God forbid, Christians, that you should be all your life time subject to bondage through fear of an event that has so much to render it not only harmless, but desirable. Does the Lord Jesus stand in no relation to you? Is not he your ransom and your advocate? Is not he your righteousness and strength? Has not he abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel? Has not he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers? Has not he said, "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death?" What is dying now, but your hour to depart out of this world unto the Father?—

"There is my house and portion fair;  
My treasure and my heart is there,  
And my abiding home:  
For me my elder brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come."

## LECTURE VI.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN PROSPERITY.

"I speak unto thee in thy Prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear."—JER. xxii. 21.

THE providence of God was presented in vision to Ezekiel, under the image of a vast wheel. The design was to show, that its dispensations were constantly changing. For as in the motion of a wheel, one spoke is always ascending, and another is descending; and one part of the ring is grating on the ground, and another is aloft in the air; so it is with the affairs of empires, families, and individuals—they never continue in one stay. And not only is

there a diversity in human conditions, so that while some are rich, others are poor; and while some are in honor, others are in obscurity and disgrace; but frequently the same person is destined successively to exemplify, in his own experience, the opposite estates of prosperity and adversity. Such characters strike us in the Scripture; they abound in history; they are to be met with in our daily walk; they are to be addressed in every congregation.

But these vicissitudes are great trials of religious principle; and happy is he who can press forward undismayed by the rough, and unseduced by the pleasant he meets with, in his course; who can preserve the balance of the mind in all the unequal pressures of human life; and who, prepared for each change of circumstances in which he can be placed, is authorized to say, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Such is the Christian—or must I say, such he ought to be! The present exercise brings him before us in the possession of

### PROSPERITY.

I need not detain you in specifying the ingredients of this envied state. It must include health. This is the salt that seasons, and the honey that sweetens every temporal comfort. Yet how little of it do some enjoy. How affecting is the complaint not a few are constrained to utter—"I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me; when I lie down, I say when shall I arise, and the night be gone; I am full of tossings to and fro, until the dawning of the day."—"He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat."—While others scarcely know from their own feelings what disease, or indisposition, or infirmity, means.

—It must take in agreeable relations. What are the caresses of the world, if a man be chilled with neglect, or repulsed with frowns at home? What are the productions of the field and the garden, if, as the Prophet says, "thorns are in our tabernacle?" "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." What a difference is there between "a brawling woman in a wide house," and "a wife that is as a loving hind and a pleasant roe!" Job, looking back to the day of his prosperity, says, "when my children were about me." They were united and affectionate and dutiful. What must be the wretchedness of a parent whose offspring are the reverse of all this!—Friendship must not be absent. Who can dispense with this balm of life? Who does not feel his need of another's bosom, if not of another's hand? What is general and indiscriminate society! I must have one whose sympathies lead him to rejoice when I rejoice, and to weep when I weep; or my grief is too heavy for me to bear; or my pleasure loses half its relish. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." Who can be so low and groveling as to have no regard for the opinion and approbation of his fellow creatures? "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches; and loving favor rather than silver and gold." "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat."—But the use of the term more directly reminds us of the fruit of our wishes, and the success of our endeavors, in our calling or profession; and the securing and commanding a degree of wealth above competency. For "money is a defence," and screens us from the

evils of dependence and embarrassment. "Money answereth all things," it procures a thousand advantages; and affords not only the necessities, but the conveniences, and indulgences, and embellishments of life.

Now the portion only of a very few favored individuals, includes all these ingredients; but the greater the confluence of them in number and degree, the better we consider the cup of prosperity replenished.

But can such a cup be seen in the hand of a Christian? Why not? In general, indeed, the language of the Scripture befriends the needy and distressed; and what generous mind does not rejoice in this aspect of benevolent preference? Who does not read with pleasure, "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and an afflicted people, and they shall trust in the Lord their God." "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." But this is not true of them, *universally and exclusively*. We are told that not many of the higher ranks in life are called; but the very assertion implies that there are *some*. Our Saviour said to his followers, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily." "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Yet he also said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The apostle who taught, that "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom," made no scruple to say, "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." Peter, also, who charged Christians not to think it strange "concerning the fiery trial as if some strange thing had happened unto them," confidently asserts, "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" And religion, by its natural influence as well as by the blessing of an overruling Providence, tends in various ways to advance the temporal welfare of men.

We have not time to exemplify these remarks; but we mention them the more readily, because some Pietists seem to look upon all the distinctions and endowments of life, as *nearly* sealing their owners unto the day of perdition; and to conclude that their good things here are only pledges of their evil ones hereafter. It is true this was the result, in the case of the rich man in the parable. But it was not so with Abraham, mentioned in the same story—yet Abraham had been very wealthy. We allow that there is enough to alarm the prosperous; but they have no ground for despair. The proprietors of no condition here are under any sentence of reprobation. They that have riches shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God; but with God all things are possible. There is a way to heaven from all the diversities of human life: and there is a passage from the mansion as well as from the cottage, though it is more narrow, and perplexing, and difficult. In a word; a Christian is never to be known *by* his condition; but he must be always known *in* it; for he belongs to "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

In confirmation of which, let us proceed to hear what God the Lord has to say concerning us in the estate we are now surveying—I *spoke unto thee in thy prosperity*—He is always alive to our welfare,

and of this he never leaves himself without witness; and if ever we err in conduct, or fail in character, it is owing to our disbelief of his word, or inattention to it. For the Scripture is not only able to make us wise unto salvation; but "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Now in your prosperity he requires of you three things:

I. That you should be AWARE OF ITS PERILS

II. That you should EMPLOY ITS SAFEGUARDS.

III. That you should IMPROVE ITS ADVANTAGES.

O let him not complain—*But thou saidst, I will not hear.*

I. You are required to be AWARE OF THE PERILS OF PROSPERITY.

Here it must be acknowledged we are furnished with a very mortifying view of human nature. The produce of creation, and the bounties of Providence, are good in themselves; and they are the gifts of God; and they ought to induce us to love and serve the Giver. And they would have this effect, were we not in a state of moral perversion and depravity. The goodness of God leadeth to repentance—this is the design of it; this is the tendency of it. But what is the effect? Answer this, ye who suppose that man is so innocent, so amiable, so dignified a creature! You deny that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. You deny that man, as he now comes into the world, is otherwise than he was originally created. But can you deny that we are evil, *because* God is good? That we are unable to bear gratification uninjured? That what should draw us to God, with the cords of a man and the bands of love, leads us away from him? That the very blessings we receive from him we convert into weapons of rebellion against our Benefactor? Or will you affirm that we *thus* came from our Maker's hand? "Lo! this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

There is one case in which prosperity is peculiarly perilous—when it is not hereditary, but acquired; and when it is acquired, not by degrees, but suddenly. He is most likely to be giddy who has not been accustomed to elevation. He is most likely to have his health injured, who passes all at once from one climate to another; while, by use, nature may be attuned to almost any extremity. But though prosperity is peculiarly dangerous when it is neither natural nor gradual, it will be easy to prove that it is *never* free from numberless moral hazards.

Let us turn first to the faithful word. What says David? "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." What says Job? "Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" What is Jeremiah's report concerning Moab? "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither



hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed." But surely it was otherwise with the Jews. Hear Moses: "He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, and fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and ki-cked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness: then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation." Hear Hosea: "According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me." Are we better than they? Let us appeal to reason, to observation, to experience. How many duties are there which prosperity tends to discourage and hinder? How many evils are there which its influence upon depraved beings is adapted to cherish and increase? What are these? Let us particularize a few of them—for their name is Legion.

—Such is *Unmindfulness of God*. Hence the caution of Moses, "When thou shalt have eaten and art full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord that brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Hence the prayer of Agar, "Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?" The disciples suffered the Saviour to sleep while the vessel was sailing smoothly: but when the wind and the waves threatened, they went to him, saying, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" It is in affliction we seek him early. It is then we think of his moral agency; and fear that he is come to call our sins to remembrance. It is then we feel our dependence upon him—then other helpers fail; then we have no substitutes; then we have no diversion—we can dispense with him no longer—we are forced upon him. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" said Pharaoh, in all the affluence of his greatness. "Entreat the Lord for me," was the suppliant language of the same haughty monarch, brought down by the judgments of heaven.

—Such is *Pride*. David remarks this, "Pride compasseth them like a chain." Nebuchadnezzar is an example of it. The king spake and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

"Pigmies are pigmies still, though perched on Alps: And pyramids are pyramids in vales."

Yet men estimate their height, not by their figure, but by their elevation. A man is as distinguishable from his circumstances as a steed is from his caparisons; and as the latter would be judged of by his stature, and strength, and gracefulness, and speed, so the former should be valued only by his personal and intrinsic worth. But to make ourselves to be something when we are nothing, we compose ourselves, so to speak, of every thing outward and adventitious; we add houses, and lands, and equipage, and offices, and titles, and attendants; and thus enlarged and magnified, we think ourselves Anakims, while others are but grasshoppers in our sight. Wealth can even give wisdom. It enlarges the understanding of the possessor. It qualifies him to speak and decide; so that his drivellings, which were despised before, become oracular. For the world is as blameable as the fool himself. The one no more readily receives than the other pays this vile homage. The

image of gold is sure of worshippers, if it be only a golden calf.

—Such is *Self-delusion*. The prosperous seldom hear the truth. They are never reprov'd. Their failings are often admired. Their faults are even turned into virtues, and imitated, by their dependants. All join to flatter and delude them. Yea, God himself is accessory to their flattery and delusion—not by his design, but by their misconstructions of his conduct. For they are induced to think that they are his favorites, because he not only spares, but indulges them; and conclude that he will not treat them worse in another world than he has done in this.

—Such is *Unwillingness to bear the Cross*. Why did the young man in the gospel go away sorrowful? "He was very rich." He had much that was amiable, and much that was promising. He engaged our Saviour's affections; and wished to follow him; but he had too much to leave behind.—Why did not the Pharisees, who believed on him, confess him? "They feared lest they should have been put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Eusebius, in speaking of the persecution under Decius, observes, that most of those who apostatized were not from among the poor, but the rich. They who are softened by care, and rendered delicate by indulgence, are little prepared for a rough campaign, and cannot be expected to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

—Such is *Earthly-mindedness*. Who are so likely to mind earthly things as those who abound with them? Who has so many ties to life? No condition, indeed, here, will bear any comparison with the future state of the blessed: yet, according to our present views and feelings, the mansion and the pleasant scenery around, have more power to attract and detain than the desolateness of the poor-house. How little have some to resign! How much have they to urge their departure! How often does the heart's bitterness lead them to sigh, "I loathe it, I would not live away!"—"O! that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest; I would haste me from the stormy wind and tempest." What uneasinesses have others to excite them! How much have they to give up! How deep-rooted are they; and what force is necessary to loosen them from their position! "Ah!" said Johnson to Garrick, as he was walking over his bowers, "these are the things that make us unwilling to die."

—Such is *Worldly Conformity*. They are not the poor, but the rich, who have intercourse with the world. These are they who are tempted to recommend themselves to their friendship; to emulate their pretensions; to adopt their maxims, and manners, and *hours*.

—We may also mention *Self-indulgence*. We are far from pleading for monkish austerities and abstemiousness. Yet a Christian is to deny himself.—Yet temperance is a part of godliness. Yet we are forbidden to provide for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. But who is most likely to be profuse in dress and in furniture? Whose table is likely to become a snare? Who is in danger of feasting himself without fear? Whose precious mornings are most likely to be wasted in bed?

—To this we may add *Unfeelingness*. He is most likely to be kind to a stranger who knows the heart of a stranger, having been a stranger in a strange land. Who ever thinks of repairing to the gay and the dissipated in the hour of trouble? What interest will he feel in my grief who never wept himself? The tenderest and most active sympathy flows from experience. What does a king know of the miseries of his subjects? He never looked into their hovel; never tasted their bitter bread. They

whose condition or office exempts them from the common vexations and distresses of life, are always the most insensible to the duties and calls of compassion. Only a priest or a Levite *could* have passed by on the other side; and left the poor, wounded, bleeding traveller to his fate.

After all, we have only presented a few specimens of the dangers of Prosperity. But surely they are enough to keep you from looking with grudging and uneasiness on the condition of those that abound in the world. Surely they are enough to induce you, instead of envying those that rise, to pity them and pray for them; for they are set in slippery places.

Surely we have said enough to excite those who are denied prosperity to be resigned and satisfied.—Ah! ye who have had your purposes broken off, even the thoughts of your hearts; ye who have wished to build your nests on high, and to say to your soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; ye to whom, after all your importunings of his providence, God has said, "Let it suffice: say no more to me of that matter"—Ah! who can tell what you have escaped? Who can tell what you might have been? You might, as Solomon has it, have been talking with your feet, and have swaggered by your neighbors. You might have answered roughly.—You might have pleased a tyrant's heart, in making yourselves feared. You might have acted a Diotrophes in the parish or the church. You might have heard with indifference every tale of woe. You might have abandoned the worship of God in your families, and have lost your attachment to his Sabbaths and his house. You might have made your passage your portion; and instead of arising and departing hence, have felt yourselves at home in the body: and "careful about many things," have overlooked that "good part" which now you have happily chosen, and which shall not be taken away from you.

Let all abandon their eager desires after the world; and if they must increase, be concerned to increase with all the increase of God. "Seekest thou great things to thyself? seek them not." "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "For they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many arrows."—The Apostle, in this passage, seems to refer to two classes of persons. First, to those who perish in their worldly things, making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. These he compares to men at sea who founder, and are seen no more—they are drowned in destruction and perdition. Secondly, to those who are not destroyed but injured. These he compares to travellers, who, seeing, as they are going along, some inviting fruit a little out of their road, step aside to gather; but as it is surrounded with thorns and briars, they wound themselves in the attempt. These *err* from the faith, and *pierce* themselves through with many sorrows.

For while the prosperity of fools destroys them, the prosperity of wise men may harm them. Saul was lost by his advancement; but David himself was injured: and hence we read of his "first ways." The hero, the conqueror, the king, never equalled the shepherd of Bethlehem.

Upon this principle, if you had to choose, you should not, you would not choose a state so frequently destructive: so commonly hurtful. You would not conclude that you were better than others,

and that you should be safe where your brethren have so generally failed. If you did, *you* would be sure to yield; for "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

But the option is not left to yourselves. The Lord chooses your inheritance for you; and in his pleasure you must acquiesce. Only be sensible of the perils of the condition.

## II. You are required to employ its SAFEGUARDS.

And *first*, if you would escape the evils of Prosperity, consider much your *Responsibility*. Never imagine that the things you possess are your own, and that you are at liberty to do what you please with them. They are all in the nature of a trust. You are not the proprietors, but the stewards.—When you receive them, a voice cries "Occupy till I come;" and then the same voice will say, "Give account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward." Keep your minds alive to the certainty of this account; the extent of this account; the strictness of this account; the nearness of this account—"Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." "Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand."

*Secondly*, Reflect on the *brevity of your Possessions*. There is a day coming when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burned up. And then, "to whom will ye flee for help, and where will you leave your glory?"—But this prospect seems very far off; and the distance prevents impression. Is death then far off? You have only a life-interest in your estate. And "what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Then you must part with all for ever. "For we brought nothing with us into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." But how frequently is the continuance of your possessions and enjoyments much shorter than life itself! "Wilt thou," therefore, says Solomon, "set thy heart on that which is not? For riches make to themselves wings and fly away." "Brethren," says the Apostle, "the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not."

*Thirdly*, Study the *vanity of your Acquisitions*.—How little can they contribute to the reality of your happiness! Look at those in the circle of your acquaintance. Do you know any of them, I will not say, that have improved in religion, but that have increased in comfort! As to yourselves; have your contentment, and peace, and pleasure, risen with your circumstances in the world? Can riches profit in the day of wrath? Can any abundance relieve the anguish of a wounded spirit? What a source of perplexity and anxiety is a prosperous estate! "In the midst of his sufficiency he shall be in straits." What an attraction is it of ill-will! What an excitement to envy and slander! The success of a rival; the superior display of a neighbor; yea, even the disregard of an individual seemingly incapable of annoying us—even his neglect may spoil the relish of a courtier's bliss, the favorite of the owner of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces. "When he came home he sent and called for his friends, and Zereah his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said, moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself; and to-morrow am I invited



unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

People often wonder at *your* uneasiness; but the heart knoweth its own bitterness. *You* feel some worm at the root withering the gourd that overshadows you. Perhaps some personal or relative trial preys upon the peace of your mind. Perhaps the dear companion who once walked with you along your flowery path is removed far from you; and disinclined to retrace the spots once endeared by social converse, you watch and are alone, as a sparrow upon the house-top. Perhaps when you sit down at table, David's seat is empty—and tears are your meat day and night. Perhaps the heir, who was to perpetuate your name and inherit your property, now occupies a tomb, on which you have inscribed, "And Thou destroyest the hope of man." Perhaps an infirmity is entailed upon you for life. Perhaps some disease is gradually undermining your frame. Perhaps your senses are declining: and desire fails; and the days are come wherein you have no pleasure. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

*Fourthly, Think how little worldly prosperity has distinguished many of the excellent of the earth.—*When you are tempted to glory in wealth, remember what a multitude there is in poor life who would make you shrink into nothing, if you were morally compared with them; and what is gold to godliness? What superior grace and wisdom and usefulness dignified numbers of those servants of the Most High God and benefactors of men, who passed their days in a state of dependence, or ended them in a prison! Read the history, examine the lives of those preachers and writers whose immortal works praise them in all the churches. Take Luther, that great reformer, who has levied a tax of admiration and gratitude on every age. He has this passage in his last will and testament: "O Lord God, I thank thee that thou hast been pleased to make me a poor and indigent man upon earth. I have neither house nor land nor money to leave behind me. Thou hast given me a wife and children, whom I now restore to thee. Lord, nourish, teach, and preserve them, as thou hast me." The Apostles could say, "Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." And the Lord of Glory, the image of the invisible God, had not where to lay his head. And yet we think wealth the standard of excellence!

—Again. *Daily realize the assurances of Revelation.* "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The influence of a greater good will abolish the impression of a less. The man who walks by sight, is sure to be conquered: the things which are seen are temporal; and he sees no other; these, therefore, strike and please and engross him. But the man who walks by faith, sees things invisible to the eye of sense; and these are eternal: and they are infinite. What is the honor that cometh from man, compared with the smiles of God? What is a handful of shining dust compared with "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" Can the stars be seen in the shining of the sun? What saved Moses in circumstances far more perilous than those of his birth? "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." What led Abraham to "sojourn," even "in the land of promise, as in a strange land, dwelling

in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise?" Faith. "For he looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

*Finally. Forget not the Admonition of the Saviour: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." And what he has joined together let no man put asunder. In vain I invoke God if I am careless; and expose myself needlessly in dangerous places and company; and leave, without a sentinel, my senses, and appetites, and passions: and keep not my heart with all diligence; and use not all the means of preservation which are placed within my reach—prayer without watching is hypocrisy. And—watching without prayer is presumption. Our strength is in God alone. He will make us know this, not only by the testimony of his word, but by our experience. And we need not be afraid of the growing conviction. When we are weak, then are we strong. For he to whom a sense of our weakness will urge us to repair, is able to keep us from falling. Whatever be our inability and danger, if he holds us up we shall be safe. Let not those be discouraged who seek his help. The very exercise of prayer tends to secure you. But you have more to rely upon than the moral influence of the duty. If there be any meaning in the Scriptures, God hears prayer: he grants our petitions; he strengthens us with might by his Spirit in the inward man. "Ask," says the Saviour, "and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."*

Thus his grace shall be sufficient for you even in prosperity. But a Christian should not only be concerned to use the world as not abusing it; he should not only be anxious to avoid the evils of his condition; but to exercise its virtues, and perform its duties, and sanctify its resources. And the

### III. Part of our subject calls upon you to IMPROVE THE ADVANTAGES OF PROSPERITY.

This is to be exemplified in three things. Gratitude, Beneficence, and Enjoyment. The first regards God. The second our fellow-creatures. The third, ourselves.

First, you are to improve your Prosperity in a way of *gratitude*. God is to be owned as the author of all. The streams of comfort are many, and flow in various channels: but with him is the fountain of life. "Do not err, my beloved brethren: every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." The silver and the gold are his. However you have obtained it, whether from inheritance or the legacies of friendship, or the labor of your own hands, he it is that giveth you power to get wealth. And your prosperity lacketh its firmest support, its loveliest ornament, its sweetest relish, if you do not acknowledge in it the providence of him whose blessing alone maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it. Is this acknowledgment made? And is it real? And is it constant? And is it fervent? What would you think of a dependant who had no claim on your bounty; whom you not only relieved, but supported, and supported in affluence; being not only attentive to his necessities, but meeting all his wishes—what would you think of such a dependant

if he should never call upon you, never send to you; never speak of you favorably to others; never think of you—but should take all this goodness as a matter of right rather than of kindness: and act as if he would have all around him to believe that it was all of his own producing or purchasing? How soon would you discontinue your unacknowledged favors; and how hateful would his conduct appear, not only to yourself, but to every one who witnessed it!

Yet how little is God owned. We sacrifice to our own net, and burn incense to our own drag. We ascribe our success to the wisdom of our own understanding; or the power of our own arm; or the interest we have in the favor of our fellow-mortals; or we take it as the effect of chance, while God is not in all our thoughts. "Therefore," says God, "I will return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof; for she did not know I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." This is a trying method to bring us to reflection: but it is often necessary.—Continued enjoyment seems to give a kind of prescription; at least it makes us forget our reliance and obligation. We are struck with what is new and out of course: while we overlook what is regular and habitual. Whereas, this should be the grand reason for your praise; for the claim arises not from our benefits being occasional, but frequent and constant: new every morning and every moment. How soon could the Great Ruler and Benefactor convince you that he is not obliged to continue what you deem your own; and that he can as easily, as justly recall what he has given. That this may not be the case, sanctify the Lord God in your thoughts. Think of your desert. Compare your condition with that of others. And while you see that the lines have fallen to you in pleasant places, and that you have a goodly heritage, say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." The beginning of some of you was small. You remember a time when you had no inheritance, no not so much as to set your foot on; and had your subsequent enlargement been foretold, you would have exclaimed with the surprised nobleman, "If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be." Surely you will follow the example of Jacob, who said, "Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands."—Surely you will retire with David before the Lord, and say, "O Lord God, what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come: and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?"

Secondly, You are to improve your Prosperity in a way of *benevolence*. In this respect you are favored above many of your brethren. Their ear is not heavy that it cannot hear; but their hand is shortened that it cannot save. They see wants and miseries which only distress them; for they have only the disposition to relieve. But you can indulge it—you have the power. Value the substance you possess on this account. And remember, also, that you have it for this very purpose. In the bestowment, God looked beyond yourselves; and designed to make you not only the subjects of his goodness, but the instruments; not only the recipients, but the diffusers. And how can you neglect to impart relief and comfort to others, while God is perpetually communicating to you; and your condition, as well as your religion, cries, "Freely ye have received, freely give." This is the way to have your posses-

sions blessed. This is the way also to have them increased. "Give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you." "The liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

Therefore says the Apostle, "Charge them that are rich in this world that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." The objects of your charity are numberless. Some of these have preferable claims; but none of them are to be excluded. As you have opportunity, you are to do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith. There are the fatherless and the widows to visit: and the sick to heal; and the naked to clothe; and the hungry to feed. "The poor you have always with you;" and if you have the ability to succor, and withhold relief, your religion would perplex an inspired Apostle. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" But there are also the careless to awaken; the ignorant to instruct; the vicious to reclaim; and the backsliding to restore. The soul is of supreme importance; and it becomes us peculiarly to aid in supporting those institutions and exertions, which have in view the spiritual and eternal welfare of men. Even these require much pecuniary assistance; and it is the highest honor that can be conferred upon money that it is employed in carrying on the concerns of the gospel. These have nobly multiplied in our day; and they occasion frequent applications to your liberality.

But surely you cannot complain of this frequency. It shows the improved state of your beloved country, religiously considered; and Christians should deem those the best times in which the best cause flourishes most. Surely you would not wish to bring back the state of things a century ago, when, for a year together, avarice and selfishness might have escaped these evangelical vexations. Have you not yourselves been accessory to this improvement? Have you not been praying that God's kingdom may come, and that his word may have free course and be glorified? And will you complain or rejoice when those prayers are answered? When you offered them, did you suppose that what you implored was to be carried on by miracles, or by means? If by means, did you stipulate in these prayers that God should employ the instrumentality of others, and not require your own? Or, did you not mean to place yourselves at his disposal; and to ask, as the work was going on, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This must have been your meaning if you prayed sincerely and earnestly; and consistency requires, if you would not be condemned out of your own mouth, every sacrifice in your power. And how much is in the power of some of you!—And how would your efficacy be increased, if you would be satisfied with a decent distinction above the vulgar, instead of being splendid; if you would avoid every extravagance and superfluity in your mode of living; if you would exercise a little of that self-denial, which, after all, is the principal test of real benevolence.

Many rules have been laid down, as to the proportion of your estate or income which should be dedicated to benevolence. If conscience was not so often asleep, or if when awake it had any chance of being heard in the same hour with the love of money, the degree might safely be left to every man's own mind. Nothing however can be more just and reasonable than the injunction of the Apostle, "Let every one of you lay by him in store as



God hath prospered him." This rule is, we fear, seldom observed. Yea some, by a perverse process, feel the disposition diminishing as the ability increases. They give not only less in proportion, but less in reality than they once did. In their contributions, as well as in their qualities, there is a gradation from gold to silver, and from silver to copper. Once they hardly thought it worth while to be covetous. They had little to set up in that character with. But wealth increased, and they soon began to hoard. Nor is it to be supposed that their eagerness to accumulate is declining with age.—The less time they have to keep, the harder they are determined to hold; for, as Young says, "there is a dying grasp as well as a dying gasp."

"Of other tyrants, short the strife;

But Avarice is king for life:

The despot twists with hard control

Eternal fetters round the soul."

But with enlarged circumstances, be ye also enlarged. This is the case with a few we have the pleasure to know. Their fortune is a blessing to the neighborhood and the nation. Their rising in life resembles the rising of the sun; the elevation illuminates and enlivens and fertilizes; and joy springs from its beams. Their wealth is like the dew, raised indeed from the earth, but only to be filtrated from its grossness, and to descend in silent refreshment, and vigor, and life. So it was with Job. He was the greatest man in the east; and he was also the most generous. His substance is mentioned; but it was not his possession, but his use of it, that rendered him so estimable. I envy not the bosom of that man who can hear without emotion his touching and eloquent appeal. "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and, when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof; (for from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone." David also had acquired much wealth: but hear his acknowledgment. "Now I have prepared with all my might, for the house of my God, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses within: the gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" Here indeed was accumulation; but the design of it was not for the pleasure of possessing. It was not for his own aggrandizement, or splendor,

or indulgence; or those of his household; but for a moral and religious purpose. It is a sad reflection, especially in our day, for a good man to die wealthy. But if he must die rich, let him die rich towards God. Let him not at his last hour testify only his selfish regards. Let the benefactor appear as well as the man; and the Christian as well as the friend and the relation. While he provides for his own, especially those of his own house, let him not forget the Saviour who loved us, and gave himself for us; and whose cause has claims infinitely above all mortal interests.

Thirdly, You are to improve your Prosperity, in a way of *enjoyment*. I need not say that there is a great difference between possession and enjoyment; and that many who have more than heart can wish, have yet no heart to use it. They are hungry in the midst of food; and are parched with thirst, though the stream is at their lip. Solomon more than once notices this wretchedness; and considers it as one of the sorest evils under the sun.—It is worthy of observation that the Latin word for miserable has been applied to designate an individual who possesses, but cannot enjoy. And well may he be called a *miser*; for of all men he is the most mean, and abject, and comfortless. And no one can more oppose the kindness of God in furnishing us with the supplies of his Providence. For he obviously designs to show us, that he is concerned, not for our existence only, but for our happiness.—He could have supported us by means of food, as disagreeable to our palate as medicine: but he has rendered our sustenance grateful and inviting; and though eating is necessary to life, no one eats to avoid death. Our senses might all have been the inlets of pain only, instead of pleasure. Can any one question whether agreeable sounds were intended to delight the ear; or agreeable scents to gratify the smell? Look at the trees in a garden, or an orchard. The fruit could have been produced without the blossom: but in this process his beauty appears in the one, before his bounty is seen in the other: and the eye is charmed as well as the taste. Well therefore does the Apostle say, "He gives us all things richly to enjoy." And there is therefore truth in the remark of the poet, "To enjoy is to obey." It is falling in with the indications of God's will; for he has given us an express injunction—"In the day of prosperity rejoice."

Religion, therefore, instead of being an enemy to the *enjoyment* of this state, enjoins it. And it produces what it requires. We are not afraid to advance it as a maxim capable of demonstration, that in proportion as men are religious, they are prepared to relish prosperity; and that though others may possess more, they will enjoy most; for, even in this sense, "a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked."

Religion refines and exalts our relish of temporal things. How low and despicable is a life filled up only with sleeping, and eating, and drinking, and trifling! A Christian rises above such an ignoble mode of being. Even in his enjoyments, reason unites with sense; and faith with reason; and devotion with faith. What is material is animated by mind; and what is animal, though its quality be not abolished, loses its grossness by intercourse with intellect and spirit. The earth grows richer by the reflections and touches of all that is heavenly. The rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley acquire a kind of sacredness and divinity in their fragrance and beauty, when they remind us of Him who is altogether lovely; and the charms of creation are hallowed and felt as means of grace, while they bring us into communion with the Creator, addressed and adored in language almost inspired—

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good—  
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous  
then!"

—And thus religion also enlarges as well as improves the enjoyment of prosperity. We readily allow that it forbids licentiousness and excess. But so does reason. So does health. Yea, so does pleasure itself. The moderate use of the indulgences of prosperity, unspeakably exceeds in enjoyment the intemperate use of the glutton and drunkard.—The very restraints which religion imposes are useful and necessary to give the more lively and potent relish to our participations. For who needs to be informed that the measure of enjoyment corresponds with the strength and freshness of the desire or the appetite? Thus the pleasure of eating depends upon hunger; and where no degree of this is felt, the most delicious viands would be insipid. The full soul loathes the honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. Thus the unwearied do not welcome repose; but the sleep of the laboring man is sweet. It is therefore easy to see that temperance is the handmaid of enjoyment.—By not impairing our appetites and desires, it keeps us from the languor and irksomeness of the dissipated; and by maintaining uninjured the capacities for enjoyment, it really cherishes and increases the resources which excess spoils and destroys.

—But this is not the only way in which religion befriends the enjoyment of prosperity. We must remark its moral influence in rectifying our dispositions and removing the causes of disquietude and dissatisfaction. All outward things affect us according to the state of the mind. It is well known to every man, that a scene which delights us at one time, will be perfectly uninteresting, if not repulsive, at another. The object in this case is the same, but the medium through which it appears, and the feelings in which it is received, are changed. No one can deny but that the agreeable impressions of outward things is impaired by infirmity and sickness of body. But many are not aware, that it may be equally injured by a disorder of the soul. Yet so it is. A pain in the tooth, or in the joint, will no more preclude enjoyment, than the workings of jealousy, or suspicion, or envy, or anger, or revenge. Under the corrosion of these evils, a man must be wretched in all the entertainments of a palace, and all the scenery of a paradise. But religion forbids and subdues these self-tormenting, as well as vile tempers. It teaches the man to love his neighbor as himself. It enables him to rejoice in another's welfare. It renders him an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile; and enables him to confide in others by judging of them from his own feelings of sincerity and harmlessness. Why is that man so cheerless and uneasy? Is he poor? Has he been robbed of his estate? Look at his portion. What one more thing can he desire? But all will not bend to his humor. All will not respect him as the first man in the neighborhood. He has the sorrow of the world that worketh death. A Christian does not feel this disease. He is meek and lowly in heart; and finds rest unto his soul. Here is another dissatisfied and peevish mortal. Nothing pleases him. He reflects upon every one around him. His house is the hospital of ill-nature, and every ward is filled with complaint. What is the cause? He will not own it; but guilt makes him fretful. He is conscious of some duty he has neglected; some sin which he has committed; some restitution which he ought to make; some connection which he ought to succor. This consciousness makes him uneasy. When censured, he knows he deserves it: when praised, he

feels he is unworthy of it. He is a burden to himself. But a good man, says Solomon, shall be satisfied from himself. His rejoicing, though not his dependence, is the testimony of his conscience. He is not free from infirmity; but he can say with David, "I was upright before Him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity."

Religion makes a man grateful; and gratitude is a lively and cheerful temper; and though to be under obligation to the mean and worthless, or to an enemy, be trying; nothing can be more delightful than to feel and acknowledge what we owe to one we greatly esteem and love, and who is worthy to be praised. David therefore speaks of the "pleasant harp;" and says, "Praise ye the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant." And to show what a connection this exercise has with happiness, we are assured that it will continue in heaven, and perfect the enjoyment of the glorified.

Religion also makes a man beneficent; and this also contributes to his happiness. What do the selfish know of the pleasure of prosperity, compared with those who love to do good and to communicate? Is it not more blessed to give than to receive? Can any gratification be so pure, so cordial, so divine, so fresh and interesting in review, as that which is reflected back into the bosom from the feelings and tears and joy of the partakers of your bounty? What voluptuary from his most studied and costly procurements ever tasted luxury like Job's? "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out."

There is one view more to be taken of the subject; it is, the confidence in God which religion inspires. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is fixed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Why do not many enjoy what God has given them? They are anxious and foreboding. They suspend their satisfaction on some future occurrence—they may meet with losses—they may come to want: thus "they are not in quiet from the fear of evil." But the soul of the Christian dwells at ease. He knows not what a day may bring forth; nor does he desire it. He has nothing to do with events. He knows that he is under the providence of his heavenly Father, who is able and engaged to make all things work together for his good.

But this implies the previous adjustment of a case most awfully interesting. Belshazzar's entertainment was destroyed as soon as he saw a handwriting against the wall. Then neither the wine, nor the music, nor the company of a thousand of his lords, had the least power to charm: and though he was ignorant of the meaning of the inscription, he foreboded evil; and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. If a man was at the most enchanting banquet, with a sword hanging over his head by a small and rotten ligature, he could not enjoy it; or if he did, it must be by forgetting his jeopardy while yet his danger continued. The sinner is the enemy of God, and the child of wrath; and there is but a step between him and eternal death. The thought of this—the reflection that I must soon, and may every moment exchange all my good things here for the worm that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched—why surely this is sufficient to turn all my joy into sadness and horror. To en-



joy, therefore, in this state, I must forget my exposure. Conscience tells me I have no right to take comfort. I must therefore creep forth and steal, while conscience is asleep. But will it, can it sleep always? How quickly may it be awakened! And then trembling takes hold upon me. My enjoyment, if it deserves the name, depends therefore on delusion; and this delusion is at the mercy of a thousand disturbers. If, therefore, I am not always in bondage, I am always subject to bondage through fear of death; and there is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked. But the Christian being justified by faith, has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. His anger is turned away; and as soon as he smiles every thing smiles. In his favor is life. Tell me, ye who are unpardoned and unrenewed, can you, you who have no hope of a better world, and no certainty of continuing an instant in this—can you enjoy the comforts of life like one who knows that whenever he dies, to die is gain? That he has in heaven a better and an enduring substance? That he has a covenant right to all he possesses? That it comes to him with the good will of his God and Saviour? saying, as he partakes—“Eat thy bread with cheerfulness, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God hath accepted thy works?”

“He looks abroad into the varied field  
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compared  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,  
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy  
With a propriety that none can feel;  
But who, with filial confidence inspired,  
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,  
And smiling say—“My Father made them all!”  
Are they not his by a peculiar right,  
And by an emphasis of interest his,  
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,  
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind  
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,  
That planned, and built, and still upholds a world  
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man?  
Yes—ye may fill your garner, ye that reap  
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good  
In senseless riot; but ye will not find  
In feasts, or in the chase, in song, or dance,  
A liberty like his, who, unimpeached  
Of usurpation, and to no man’s wrong,  
Appropriates nature as his Father’s work,  
And has a richer use of yours than you.”

We have seen how religion befriends Prosperity, by raising and increasing its enjoyments. But you ask, can it *preserve*? Yes. It insures the continuance as far as it is good for us.

But we are not going to deny that every thing here is precarious. “Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: but if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they be many. All that cometh is vanity.” Yes, your treasure on earth moth and rust may corrupt, or thieves break through and steal. Your health may be exchanged for sickness. Your friends may be converted into enemies. Your relations may be carried down to the dust. The soft and delicate hand may be forced to ply the oar of labor. You may not be known of those your bounty has fed. And after the morning sunshine, the noon or the evening of life may set in with dark waters and thick clouds of the sky. Is such vicissitude impossible? Improbable? Unfrequent? Let the day in which we live answer this.

And such desolation religion may not interfere

to prevent. Is it then useless? And does it keep aloof when we need its aid? No. When it does not rescue us from the evil day, it prepares us for it. What it does not prevent it softens. What it does not hinder it sanctifies. It indemnifies the sufferer by inward supports, and future expectation. It renders every loss a gain. It turns the curse into a blessing.

What will the worldling do in the loss of his prosperity? His portion is gone. His hope is wrecked. His heart is desolate. Refuge fails him. He curses God and his king, and looks upward. Or he lies down in his shame, and his soul prefers strangling and death rather than life. His time ends with one hell, and his eternity begins with another. But to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. God is his refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. He feels, but he is not miserable. He is perplexed, but not in despair. He is cast down, but not destroyed. He is laid waste, but he is not resourceless: “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.”

But this falls in with the subject of our next Lecture; which will show us the Christian in Adversity.

## LECTURE VII.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN ADVERSITY.

“*In the day of adversity consider.*”—Eccles. vii. 14.

THE condition in which we have recently viewed the Christian is not a very common one. We felt the difficulty; and in the course of the Lecture were often led to make the PROSPEROUS the subjects of reflection, rather than the objects of address. For when a minister enters his pulpit, how few among the godly can he see in his audience, that are set on the high places of the earth, and have the waters of a full cup wrung out unto them, and have more than heart can wish!

But, of this kind, we feel no difficulty in the present service. We are no more at a loss to find persons to address, than topics to enlarge upon, when we treat of AFFLICTION. The inheritance of grief is as sure to mortals, as the laws of nature are inviolable—“Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” Some parts of his destiny are less exposed, and less painful than others; but after every concession, life is a warfare, and earth is a vale of tears.

“*I hang the world in mourning*” It is Solomon, who saw its most favored aspects, and enjoyed its most envied resources; it is all history; it is universal observation; it is individual experience, that proclaims, “All is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Who has purchased an assurance from accident and disease? Who has not enemies that oppose him? Cares that corrode him? Fears that dismay him? Disappointments that confound him? Who does not find in his comforts the elements of sorrow? In his possessions, the sources of danger? In his distinctions, the excitements of envy and detraction? In his affections, the seeds of anxiety and anguish? In his connections, the pledges of apprehension and bereavement?

“E’en roses grow on thorns,  
And honey wears a sting.”

Sufferer! you think your case is singular, and you are often urged to exclaim, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." "Behold and see, if there be sorrow like unto *my* sorrow." But this is the language of self-importance, and ignorance. "For there hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man."

But you ask—"How is it, not with the man, but with the *Christian*? Has the favorite of Heaven no indulgences, or at least, no exemptions on earth? Surely, if they had it in their power; surely, the friend would secure the companion of his bosom, and the father the child of his love, from every thing hurtful and distressing. If God was my father and my friend, he *could* by one volition of his will set me at ease; and *would* he suffer me to walk in the midst of trouble, to be straitened in want, and to pine away with sickness? If I am his, why am I thus?" Yet David said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." And our Saviour says to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And it is the *Christian* we are to view, this morning,

#### IN ADVERSITY.

It is to "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," that the apostle Peter addressed himself, when, to break the force of their surprise, he said, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." No. Religion does not preclude the evil day; but it prepares us for it; and shows itself to most advantage, when all other resources *must* fail.

We have a thousand instructions and admonitions concerning the spirit and demeanor of the Christian in tribulation: but they may be all summed up in the words of our text—"In the day of adversity consider."

We enter upon our subject with one important remark. Whatever the people of the world may think of it, the religion of Christ is "a reasonable service." Nothing can be more distinguishable from groundless belief, from the enthusiasm of ignorant impulses, from a mere mass of unintelligible feelings. It commences in the renewing of the mind. It is carried on through the medium of thought. Nothing can be moral that does not arise from design, and is not influenced by motive. Spiritual agencies are not like the cures of a charm, of whose efficiency no account can be given. They are not like the forced motions of a machine insensible of its workings and results. Neither are they like the operations of the physical powers in the human body: these are carried on independently of the mind and will. The digestive action, the secretion of the fluids, the circulation of the blood, go on as well, if not better, when we are asleep, as when we are awake. This, it would appear, is too much the notion some entertain of the work of the Spirit. But this is the perversion of the language of Scripture. According to the sacred writers, as to religious influences, we are not only the subjects, but the instruments. What is done in us, is done by us. God is the author of every thing good: our progress is from him; but he does not *carry* us along in the way everlasting, but enables us to *walk*. He works in us; but it is to *will* and to *do*. We are not only impressed, but employed. Faith and repentance are the gifts of God; yet we believe and repent, and not God.

This being premised, we observe, that religion arises from *consideration*. Therefore, God, complaining of the Jews, says, "My people do not consider." Therefore he cries, "Consider your ways." Therefore David says, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." This ex-

tends to each part of religion, as well as the whole. The Christian's abhorrence of sin is not a thoughtless aversion—"How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" His godly sorrow is not a thoughtless grief—"They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn." His confidence is not a thoughtless trust—"They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." His hope is not a presumptuous expectation—He is "ready to give a reason of the hope that is in him." His conduct in trouble is not the result of a natural hardihood, a brutal apathy, a careless desperation—it is the effect of thought, scriptural thought, sanctified thought—"In the day of adversity consider."

Christians! there are many things you ought to consider in the day of trouble; but we shall confine your attention to two only. The DESIGN of Affliction, and the RELIEF of Affliction.

I. The DESIGN of AFFLICTION, to regulate your DUTY. And

II. The RELIEF of AFFLICTION, to support your HOPE.

The one will keep you from "despising the chastening of the Lord;" the other, from "fainting when you are rebuked of him."

#### I. Consider the DESIGN of AFFLICTION.

Without this, you cannot discharge the duty of the condition. For what is this duty? It is not only to possess your souls in patience—it is not only to submit yourselves under the mighty hand of God—but to acquiesce in the pleasure of the Almighty. It is not to say, "This is my grief, and I must bear it;" but "Here I am, let him do what seemeth him good." Nothing less is required of you, as Christians, than a willing, cheerful resignation. But this can only flow from a knowledge of him that smiteth you. You may yield, but you cannot acquiesce, without confidence in him. You may, with David, be dumb and open not your mouth, because he doeth it; and you may say with Watts,

"Peace, all our angry passions: then  
Let each rebellious sigh  
Be silent at his sovereign will,  
And every murmur die."

—But you cannot render a voluntary, and cheerful, and grateful resignation, till you see the righteousness, the wisdom, and, above all, the *kindness* of his dispensations towards you. Therefore you are commanded to *hear* the rod—What does it say? "And in the day of adversity to *consider*"—to consider the ends he has in view in afflicting you. What are these ends? They all show that resignation is the most dutiful and becoming thing in the world. They are all founded in our exigencies and advantages: but they are various; and none of them must be lost sight of. For a Christian will often find it necessary to turn to each of them before he can obtain an answer to the prayer, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me." They include Correction—Prevention—Trial—Instruction—and Usefulness.

First, *Correction*. How absurd it is to suppose that God will suffer his children to act improperly, and not reprove them! The very discipline shows that they are not abandoned. It is the language of the paternal heart—"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

No; he "will not cast away his people whom he foreknew;" but this is the law of his house—"If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my



judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."

And these stripes regard sins of omission, as well as of commission. For God enjoins, as well as forbids; and we offend by refusing his orders, as well as by opposing his prohibitions. Yea, further, they regard the state of the heart, as well as the conduct of the life—for "the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." Where no miscarriages have appeared to our fellow-Christians, what a fall is there often in our feelings and our motives! What a decay of devotion! What a coldness of love! What a want of gratitude! What a loss of confidence! What a waste of time! What a misimprovement of privileges! How does this enlarge the sphere of correction! And when all these calls for the rod are taken into the account, have we any reason to wonder that we are afflicted? Surely the cause for astonishment lies on the other side—that we so often escape; and that our chastisements are not only so few, but so gentle and tender. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

Secondly, *Prevention*. It is proverbially and truly said, that prevention is more than cure. In no case will this better apply, than in our moral failures. Repentance will not always fully recover us as to this world; or hinder the natural effects of our conduct, from being entailed upon us for life. David fell by temptation, and was *reclaimed* and forgiven: yet his child died, and the sword never departed from his house; and his sin, in the scandal and mischief, was ever before him. Joseph was assailed by the same foe; but he was *preserved*; and thus sustained his peace of mind, and the approbation of his conduct, and the value of his reputation, and the usefulness of his character, and the benefit of his example. Hezekiah's "heart *was* lifted up;" and as the consequence, "wrath came upon him and upon all Judah." Paul was in danger from the same quarter. From his peculiar privileges he was exposed to high-mindedness; and we know not what injuries might have resulted from it to himself and others; but he was not elated. It would seem that he was ignorant of his jeopardy; but he had one to watch over him, who was wiser than himself, and could see effects in their causes. And how did he secure him? "Lest," says he, "I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." What this particularly was, we cannot determine: but it was—and this is sufficient for our purpose—it was a very sharp and painful affliction; and so anguish him, that he "besought the Lord thrice," that is, frequently and fervently, "that it might depart from him."

Ah, Christian, if you could see things as they really are in their moral relations, how many of your sufferings might be explained upon this principle. You have perhaps examined yourself; and though you have always enough in your general unworthiness and imperfections to render you vulnerable to trouble, yet you have been able to discover no one duty that you have knowingly neglected; no one sin that you have knowingly committed; no one idol that you have knowingly adored. But the case was this. You were not vain; but you were becoming so; and it was needful to withdraw the adulation and the incense in time. You were not avaricious; but you were becoming so; and it was necessary to lay waste the gain which

made you think of accumulation. You had not worshipped the creature; but the growing fondness would soon have made you kneel, had not the desire of your eyes been taken away with a stroke.

We are little aware, now, of the obligations we are under, for our preservation, to the goodness of God; and the reason is, because the prevention which hinders the injury, hinders the discovery. But there are no blessings for which we shall be more thankful in the world of light, than preserving mercies; and we shall then perceive that the greater part of these were administered by affliction.—These often answered the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." These checked us; but it was in going astray. The hinderance was suddenly interposed; but the danger was immediate, and the next movement would have been into a pitfall. It was sharp as a hedge of thorns; but it was necessary to pierce us back. It was impenetrable as a wall; but it was necessary to make us despair of going on. At first, we felt that we did well to be angry; but a pause was admitted, and the disappointment induced reflection, and we said, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now."

Thirdly, *Probation*. It is for this reason that afflictions are so often called trials and temptations in the Scripture. They are in the nature of tests applied to our principles and dispositions; they are experiments employed to discover and display the reality and the degree of the evil or good there is in us. Moses tells the Jews, the design of the discipline to which they had been so long subjected in the wilderness, was to prove them, and to know what was in their heart, and whether they would keep his commandments or no. And without this process, others would not have believed, nor could they have believed themselves, that they were so unbelieving, so rebellious, so perverse, so ungrateful, as they were now demonstrated to be. Job was charged with not serving God for nought; and the accuser of the brethren said, "Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about all that he hath on every side? But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." How was this to be decided? God stripped him of all; of his cattle, of his servants, of his children.—But instead of resentment and reviling, he worships, and says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; *blessed* be the name of the Lord." "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life," says the defeated but insolent foe: But "put forth now thine hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." And lo! he is covered with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; and he takes a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sits among the ashes. But his lips murmur no reflection upon Providence. And when his wife, amazed at his enduring, asks, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die," what says the sufferer?—"Shall we receive good at the Lord's hand, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." A friend is born for adversity. But this last solace fails him, and his connections, instead of soothing him, reproach and condemn. But even now he looks up and cries—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Was he then perfect in the trial? He bore the proof; and was evinced to be gold. But he was not free from dross. He partially failed in the process—and even cursed the day of his birth. And he, even he, left a complete example to be furnished, by one who was fairer than the children of men; who did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but com-

mitted himself to him that judgeth righteously, saying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." When the prince of this world came, even in his hour and power of darkness, he found nothing in him: no guilt to accuse him of; no corruption to operate upon. Agitate pure water, and no defilement will appear; but let the sea that has filthiness at the bottom be troubled, and however clean and clear it looks above, its waves will cast up mire and dirt. Afflictions are to the soul, like the rains to the house; we suspected no apertures in the roof, till the droppings through told the tale. The effects of these trials, therefore, are always humbling to the Christian. He is convinced by them that he has much less grace than he imagined: he is often rendered a wonder as well as a grief to himself. "I little thought I was so proud, till I was required to stoop; or so impatient, till I was required to wait; or so easily provoked, till I met with such an offence; or was so rooted to earth, till so much force was exerted to detach me from it." Such must be the language of every attentive and faithful self-observer, when he reviews the trying scenes through which he has passed. We resemble the birds; they build in the lovely and inviting part of the year; and the foliage hides their nests; but in the winter, when the leaves have dropped off, their nests appear. Our retreats and delights in prosperity are discovered in adversity: and many a passenger can see where we rested when we made not God our trust. When we have, *with* the Lord, health, and honor, and affluence, and friends; it is not easy to determine whether we are making *him* or *these* our dependance and our portion. But when these are removed, the case is decided. If we were relying upon them, we sink; but if while we were using them, we were cleaving to him, our support will remain; and embracing him firmer than before, we shall break through every dependance and say—"Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Fourthly, *Instruction*. By long usage affliction has been spoken of as a school. It is indeed a dear one; but there is none like it. In this lecture-room the lessons are accompanied with experiments; and the great Teacher, by facts as well as words, says—"There—*There*—See what an evil and bitter thing sin is. See what a poor and vain thing the world is. See how it attracts its votaries to show its emptiness, and elevates only to depress. See what a precarious friendship is. See what human helpers can do for you. Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God; which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever."

These instances appeal to the conscience as well as the understanding. They serve not only to explain the subjects, but to quicken our attention.—They produce a silence in the mind; a solemnity of soul; a softness of heart, that prepares us to receive divine truth. "Then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction. These are the lessons that make the deepest impression; that are the most easily and firmly remembered; that are the most useful and profitable in their effects."

"Blessed," says David, "is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest out of thy law." Nor did he speak from reasoning or faith only, but from experience: "It is good for me that I have been afflict-

ed; that I might learn thy statutes." Luther says, "I never knew the meaning of the word, *til*. I was afflicted." "We fear," says Bishop Hall, "our best friends; for my part, I have learned more of God and myself in one week's extremity, than the prosperity of a whole life had taught me before."

Lastly, *Usefulness*. Affliction gives a man the tongue of the learned, that he may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. It produces that sympathy which arises most powerfully from experience; and which indeed can hardly be found without it. In vain you repair in the hour of trouble to those who never knew what an anguish meant. They will not listen to your tale of woe.—It does not interest them—they do not understand it—they are unacquainted with grief. But he who has borne the smart himself, will not, cannot, with a careless mein and an unfeeling heart, listen to a sufferer who cries, "Pity me, pity me, O ye, my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." "Be kind," said Moses to the Jews, "be kind to strangers, for ye know the heart of a stranger; for ye were strangers in a strange land." In this way, the Redeemer himself is not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; he was in all points tempted like as we are: and in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succor them that are tempted.

But nothing strikes like a fact. The oak scathed with lightning attracts the notice of passengers, more than all the other trees of the forest. Trouble awakens attention, and draws forth inquiry. The Christian is never so well circumstanced, to "glorify the Lord, as in the fires." There he can display the tenderness of his care, the truth of his promise, the excellency of the gospel, the supports of divine grace. In the review of my own varied intercourse with society, I confess nothing so vividly and powerfully affects me, as what I recollect to have met with from pious individuals exemplifying the spirit and resources of Christianity under bodily disease, and the losses, and bereavements, and disappointments of life. O when I have visited such a martyr—such a witness for God; when I have found him standing in the evil day like a rock in a raging current with sunshine on his brow; when I have observed him, full of tribulation in the world, and of peace in Christ—mourning more for his sins than his sorrows—afraid of dishonoring his profession by impatience and unbelief—more concerned to have his crosses sanctified, than to have them removed—turning a fearful eye towards the Inflictor, and saying, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast inflicted me; just and true are all thy ways, O thou King of saints—He hath done all things well"—when I have witnessed religion—and I have witnessed it—accomplishing achievements like these, I have said to it as I withdrew, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee."

As the sky is only decked with stars in the night, so the Christian shines most in the darkness of affliction; and by nothing is he so impressive as by the exercise of the passive graces. And this should reconcile you to the will of God in your sufferings. You are not to be selfish. You are not detached individuals; but parts of a community, civil and religious. And you should think yourselves honored and happy in serving your generation; and the manner in which you are to serve it, you are to leave to God. People sometimes express a wish to be useful; but it must be in their own way. They wish to do something, but their meaning is, to do something that is public and striking; originating, perhaps, some institution, or heading some new party—doing something that excites notice and



noise. Here the motive *may* be good, but it should be peculiarly examined; for exertions of this kind fall in with the principles of our nature, the love of action and the desire of fame. "But they also *serve* that wait." And they also serve that suffer. You may be called to retire rather than to act. You may be usefully employed in the quiet duties of domestic life, or in the soberness and sameness of business. Yea, you may be detached from your callings, and be confined by accident or sickness, and have not only wearisome nights, but months of *vanity* appointed you. So you may deem them—and suppose that you are going to be laid aside, when you are perhaps approaching the most profitable portion of your lives. For there, in the house of affliction, and on the bed of languishing; there, the minister who visits you shall be taught how to preach; your fellow-Christians shall be edified; the young convert shall be encouraged and confirmed; the careless neighbor shall be impressed—or, even in the want of human observers, who can tell but other witnesses may look down and adore the displays of divine grace in your sufferings, and glorify God in you. For we are "a spectacle to the world, to *angels*, and to men."

## II. In the day of adversity consider your RELIEFS.

This is necessary to support your hope, and to keep you from being swallowed up of over-much sorrow. You may feel. You must feel. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." It does not depend upon us to be unaffected with certain events. We are made susceptible of pain, and of sorrow: religion cannot require us to attempt to throw off our nature, and to say to our Maker, "Why hast thou made me thus?"—There is no giving up what we do not prize; no bearing what we do not feel; no enduring what we do not suffer. Correction is founded on our aversion to misery; and without the sensibility, the discipline cannot answer any of the moral purposes for which it is designed; all of which are included in our being made perfect through suffering.

Yet there is an extreme on the right hand, as well as on the left. As we are not apt to "despise the chastening of the Lord," so neither are we to "faint when we are rebuked of him." To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; and he has resources which are not only sufficient to moderate his sorrow, but even to turn his sorrow into joy. This is the high ground we take for a suffering Christian; to "glorify also in tribulation;" and to "count it all joy when" he falls "into divers temptations." We are far from saying that he always can do this actually: but we are not to take his duty from his experience; but to endeavor to bring his experience to his duty. What is not invariably his attainment, should be constantly his aim. To aid you in aspiring after this distinction,

Consider, *First*, That your afflictions are not *peculiar*. "The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world." And will you refuse to drink of the cup they drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism they are baptized with? Is Providence in your case to deviate from the treatment of all the other branches of the household of faith? "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." To which of the saints in Scripture or in history will you turn, in refutation of this decision? "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" In vain you allege that you are acquainted with persons truly godly who are not afflicted. It is no easy thing to determine who *are* truly godly. Besides—*Have* they not been afflicted? *Will* they not be af-

fllicted? Are you sure they *are not* afflicted even *now*? The rod is not always composed of the same twigs. There are griefs relative as well as personal; mental as well as corporeal; imaginary as well as real; invisible as well as apparent. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness." There are crosses which cannot be displayed. There are groanings which cannot be uttered—He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him—

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.  
No traveller e'er reached that blest abode,  
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.  
The world may dance along the flowery plain,  
Cheered as they go by many a sprightly strain;  
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread  
With unshod feet they yet securely tread:  
Admonished, scorn the caution and the friend;  
Bent upon pleasure, heedless of its end.  
But He who knew what human hearts would  
prove,  
How slow to learn the dictates of his love;  
That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,  
A life of ease would make them harder still;  
In pity to the sinners he designed  
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,  
Called for a cloud to darken all their years,  
And said, 'Go, spend them in the vale of tears.'"

*Secondly*, Consider that they are not *casual*. Do our fellow-creatures oppose and injure us? They always act freely, and often criminally; yet we are not left to the vices and passions of men. They could have no power at all against us except it were given them from above. Nothing in any of our sufferings occurs by chance—there is no such divinity in the universe. Occurrences may be accidental and contingent with regard to us, who are not acquainted with the plan to be executed and developed; but they are not so with regard to him who sees the end from the beginning, and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. What takes place without him? "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." And he strikes no random blows. "He performeth the thing that is appointed for us:" and the appointment is made by one who has not only a right to ordain, but who cannot pervert justice; who is too wise to err; and who loved us so as not to spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. We are allowed, we are required to cast all our care on him, with the assurance that he careth for us. And is not his attention, his solicitude—how condescending is God in his language—sufficient to relieve our minds? How delightful is it to sit at the feet of the great Teacher, and hear him discourse on the doctrine of Providence. Here we have nothing of the language of infidel philosophy. He does not represent the Supreme Being as occupied with worlds and whole systems, but overlooking individuals, and minute concerns—he did not suppose the Supreme Being capable of perplexity and fatigue—he did not think any thing too hard for infinite wisdom and power—he did not think it beneath God to govern what was not beneath him to create. Among men, an attention to little things prevents an attention to great things; and an attention to great things prevents an attention to little ones; and no one can equally regard all the claims of the province of government he fills, however limited it may be. But, says Jesus, "He maketh his sun to rise; and, he "sends forth his angels;" and "a sparrow falls not to the ground without your heavenly Father; and the hairs of your head are all numbered." "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?" "Behold the fowls of the

air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Exclude this doctrine, and God is a God afar off; there is no foundation for confidence; there is no excitement to devotion: in the darkness of my perplexities and difficulties, I grope around, and can feel nothing to support me. But by realizing his superintending agency, I bring him near; and by his presence fill what otherwise would be an awful and irksome void. He hears prayer. His interposition is attainable. By being connected with God, every place is rendered holy, every object interesting; every comfort is enriched, and every trial is softened. This principle I take with me into every allotment, every circumstance; and say, "the cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it? It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. I will cry unto God most high, unto God who performeth all things for me."

*Thirdly*, Consider that they are not *penal*. When the Israelites came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters, for they were bitter. "And Moses cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." If this was not designed to be a type, it yields us a striking allusion.

"Bitter indeed the waters are  
Which in this desert flow;  
Though to the eye they promise fair,  
They taste of sin and woe."

What is the cure? The Cross—

"The Cross on which the Saviour hung,  
And conquered for his saints,—  
This is the tree, by faith applied,  
That sweetens all complaints."

Thousands have found the blest effect,  
Nor longer mourn their lot:  
While on his sorrows they reflect,  
Their own are all forgot."

If the burden of sin be removed, whatever else is laid on us will be felt to be light. And surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. Hence though his sufferings do not secure us from suffering, they change the nature and design of our afflictions; so that, instead of their being punishments, they are corrections; and are inflicted not by the sword of the Judge, but by the rod of a Father. The believer may sometimes misapprehend them, and fearful of their being the messengers of justice, may say unto God, Do not condemn me. But the apprehension is groundless. We are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. He has redeemed them from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for them. And being now justified by his blood, they shall be saved from wrath through him. This is the rest wherewith we are to cause the uneasy to rest; and this is the refreshing. He was angry with us, but his anger is turned away: and he comforteth us. And not only so, but we also joy through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

*Fourthly*, Consider that they are not *unalloyed*. The apostle seems to enjoin too much, when he says, "In every thing give thanks." But there is a reason for it. Take your condition, however trying. Has it no alleviations? Let candor, let gratitude, let truth examine the circumstances of the case. Is there nothing in the time? nothing in the place? nothing in the manner? nothing in the subject of affliction, that serves to soften its pressure? Do you believe that it might not have been worse? "Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it. He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." Take your case and lay it by the side of your desert. What would you have suffered had he dealt with you after your sins, or rewarded you according to your iniquities? Place it by the side of the condition of others. You have lost much of your substance: but they have nothing left. You have buried one of your children; the grave has written them childless in the earth. You walk upon crutches; they are bed-ridden. You have months of vanity; but they have wearisome nights, and the multitude of their bones is filled with strong pain. But O think of the Saviour. Think of his dignity: or his preceding state; of his innocency. We suffer justly, for we suffer the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing amiss. Yet see him. You suffer partially; he suffered in every part that was capable of passion. You suffer occasionally; and, for hours and days of pain, you have weeks and months of ease and pleasure; his sufferings reached from the manger to the cross: "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Your sufferings are unforeseen; his were known from the beginning; and he bore them in prospect before he endured them in reality. And whose tongue can express, whose imagination can conceive, what he endured when he began to be sore amazed and very heavy? when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death? when his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling to the ground? when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

"Now let our pains be all forgot,  
Our hearts no more repine:  
Our sufferings are not worth a thought,  
When, Lord, compared with thine."

*Fifthly*, Consider that you are not to bear them *alone*. For he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." This is a general promise, and necessarily includes every particular case. But knowing the anxieties and forebodings of the heart, he has been pleased to issue particular assurances with regard to the hour of suffering. "I will be with thee in trouble." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Herein his conduct forms a contrast with the friendship of others. A friend is born for adversity; but he oftener raises expectations than realizes them. And Solomon tells us, that "confidence in an unfaithful man in the time of trouble is like a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint." These are more than useless.—You attempt to use them, and they not only fail, but make you writhe with pain. "To him that is afflicted, pity should be showed of his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty." Job found it so, and said, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks that pass away." Paul found it so: and though the brethren came to meet him, when he was going to Rome to



appeal unto Cæsar, as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, he complains, "At my first answer no man stood by me, but all men forsook me." But he adds, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood by me and strengthened me." He is true, whoever is treacherous: whoever fails, he is faithful. To this, Latimer testified in his last moments. Being fastened to the stake, and the fire just about to be kindled, he turned a heavenly countenance towards his fellow-sufferer, and said, "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." While Ridley answered, "Yes, be of good cheer, brother; he will abate the fury of the flames, or give us strength to abide them." Spilbury had suffered for conscience' sake, and had been released from his confinement. But when apprehended a second time, he said, seeing his wife and children weeping, "I am not afraid to go to prison now—I found God there the first time." In his flight and dreariness, the vision at Bethel was a privilege beyond all Jacob's expectation and thought. Driven from home, and travelling alone: having no guide to direct him, no defender to protect him, no associate to soothe his mind by communion; a forlorn youth, roaming on his sad condition, and conflicting with those fears which attend uncertain events—he lights on a certain place, and tarries there all night, because the sun was set. The darkness was his curtains, the ground his bed, and a stone his pillow. There he falls asleep, and sees and hears what encouraged him to the last moment of life. But said he in the morning, "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." This ignorance and surprise serve to represent the apprehensions of many of the people of God: they seem to think they shall be found deserted in such situations and difficulties. But he is better than their fears; he surpasses even their hopes. He is there, and no sooner do they call, than he answers, "Here I am."

Yea, he is not only with them really, but peculiarly in the day of trouble. "As one whom his mother comforteth," says he, "so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."—The anxious, tender mother, regards all her offspring; but she is most concerned for the poor weakly, sickly child. The knee, the bosom is for *him*; for *him* is the prepared delicacy, and the noiseless room, and the breathless step, and the frequent watching and leaning over the bed of languishing, and the entreated reception of the offensive draught, accompanied with the sincere assurance, "Ah, my darling child, how gladly would I take it for thee." And thus it is with his afflicted people. They have their special privileges. As their day, so their strength is; and as the sufferings of Christ abound in them, the consolation also aboundeth by Christ: and thousands can testify that they have had clearer discoveries, richer communications, and tenderer supports under their trials than they ever experienced in seasons of ease and prosperity. What want we more? "God," says the Church, "is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." No creature can be a substitute for him; but he is more than a substitute for every creature: and his presence peoples and fertilizes and gladdens the gloomiest desert: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and there will I speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence: and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there." The lamp cannot supply the place of the sun; but you have no reason to complain, if you can say, with Mrs. Rowe,

"Thou dost but take the lamp away,  
To bless we with unclouded day."

If we faint in the day of adversity, it is by losing sight of him whose grace is always sufficient for us. We resemble Peter. "Come," said our Saviour "And when he was come down out of the ship, he walketh upon the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, Lord, save me." Ah, said Jesus, you should have looked not at the waves, but at me. Am not I here? Within sight? within reach? "And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him; and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—How sublime is the exclamation of Doddridge; but it is founded in reason and truth—make it, Christian, whatever threatens, your own—

"If thou, my Jesus, still art nigh,  
Cheerful I live, and cheerful die;  
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,  
To find ten thousand worlds in thee!"

*Lastly*, Consider that you are not to endure them *always*. "For there is an end, and thy expectation shall not be cut off." That end is *certain*. Sisieria's mother anxiously waited at the window for the arrival of her son, but he never came. The warrior has confidently reckoned upon a victory, which he never obtained; and the mariner has been ready to hail a desired haven, which he never reached.—"We looked," said the disappointed Jews, "for light, and behold darkness; for peace, and behold trouble." But, O Christian, there is hope in thy end—a hope that cannot make ashamed. Thy release from sorrow is as sure as the purpose, the promise, the covenant, the oath of God can render it. That end is *near*. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." If your cross be heavy, you have not to carry it far.—If life be short, trouble cannot be long. When a few years are come, you will go the way whence you will not return. It may be much less. A few months; a few weeks; a few days more; and all will be peace, all will be quietness, all will be assurance for ever. The sacred writers love to diminish the period. In one place they tell us, "weeping may endure a *night*, but joy cometh in the morning." In another, that these "light afflictions are but for a *moment*." In a third, that "for a *small* moment we are forsaken." So, and no more is it in the estimation of faith, and compared with eternity. That end is *blessed* and *glorious*. No power of description or thought can do it justice. It will bring a full development of all the trying dispensations through which you have passed. You shall no longer walk by faith, but by sight. You shall see that his work is perfect, and his ways judgment. You shall see how the most adverse providences were essential to your welfare; and not only feeling satisfied, but filled with wonder and gratitude, you will be able to say,

"Amidst my list of blessings infinite,  
Stands this the foremost, that my heart has blec.  
For all, I bless thee; most for the *severe*."

What was Canaan to the Jews, after all the bondage of Egypt, and the travels and privations of the desert; what was that land flowing with milk and honey, that rest which the Lord their God gave them, compared with the rest that remains for the people of God—that better, that heavenly country! What a complete, what an eternal discharge! Of all your sufferings, nothing will remain but the remembrance, and this will enhance the deliverance;

and "the greater the sorrow, the louder you'll sing." The shadow of care, of sorrow, of fear, shall never flit over those regions of repose and blessedness.—"Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." I could go on repeating Scripture, for it loves to dwell upon this subject; but I will conclude this reference with two passages.—The one is, the testimony of the apostle Paul. He spoke from experience. No one had suffered more; and he had been in the third heaven. But hear him: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." The other is the address of the angel to John in the Revelation; words which Burns, the poet, says he could never, from a child, read without tears—so allied is the tenderness of genius to the sentiments of piety. "He said unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Men and brethren, you have often heard it said, "The end crowns the action." "All is well, that ends well." Now religion has this recommendation. We are far from denying its present advantages; for we know from Scripture and observation and experience, that it is profitable unto all things, and has promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. But allowing that it were all gloom, and self-denial, and sacrifice, and suffering here; yet "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." The happiness in which it terminates, infinitely more than indemnifies and recompenses all the hardships and trials of the passage. Even Balaam confessed this; and prayed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

What a difference between the Christian and others! Both are advancing towards the close of life; but *they* are leaving their good things, and *he* his evil ones. Both will soon bid an eternal farewell; but *they* to their joys, and *he* to his sorrows. *They* at death will plunge into "the blackness of darkness for ever;" while *he* will reach "the inheritance of the saints in light."

—So reasonable is the Christian's resignation; and so well founded is the Christian's hope, with regard to affliction.

—"But what has such a subject as this to do with me? I am not in trouble." Then I tremble for you. We know of whom David speaks, when he says, "They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men." And we know who has said, "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." But if you are not afflicted, you soon may be. Every thing here is uncertain. How often is the lamp of the wicked put out. Truth whispers, "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: but if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity." Is it not therefore wise to provide against what is possible, what is probable—yea, I will add, unavoidable? "A prudent man foreseeth the evil,

and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." But are you sure you are not afflicted even now? In the midst of your sufficiency, are you not in straits? In all your successes, do you not feel a cold aching void within, still urging you to ask, "Who will show us any good?" While you walk according to the course of the world, do you not complain of the poverty of its pleasures, and the falseness of its resources? Are you not dissatisfied with all creature enjoyments? Is there not a constant war between your inclinations and convictions? Does not conscience often condemn you? Have you not your forebodings of the future? Do you never think of the infirmities of approaching years; of the house appointed for all living; of the judgment-seat of Christ?

Perhaps at this very moment you are not strangers to a wish that you had never been born. Colonel Gardiner tells us, "that while he was keeping up every gay appearance, and was envied as the happiest of mortals, he would gladly have exchanged conditions with a dog." "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked."

—But here are some, here are many before me who are in trouble. For the days are evil; and the cup is going round; and what family, what individual is not called to taste the bitterness, if not to drink the very dregs? I do not ask you what your trials are; but I must inquire, what are you doing under them? Are you despising the chastening of the Lord, or are you fainting now you are rebuked of him?—Unsanctified trouble always produces one of these: it always hardens the sufferer against God, or sinks him into despondency.

Is the former of these your case? Are you one of those, who, when he arrays himself against them, instead of submitting, "rush upon the thick bosses of his buckler;" and "fight against God?" Are you like Ahaz, of whom it is said, "In his affliction he sinned yet more and more against God—This is that Ahaz!" It was an awful appeal that Jeremiah made to God, concerning many of his hearers. Must your preacher prefer the same? "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." If this be the case, faithfulness requires me to tell you that one of these two consequences will be sure to follow. That is—either God, provoked by your contempt of his correction, will cease to disturb you, and recalling the instruments of his discipline, will say, "They are joined to idols, let them alone;" or he will turn the rod into a scorpion, and fulfil the threatening, "If ye walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you, and punish you seven times for your iniquity." Thus the blow first affects the man's property. Then it strikes a remoter relation. Then it takes away the desire of his eyes. Then it invades his own person, and shakes him by disorder over the pit—and he recovers—and turns again to folly. At length, having been often reprov'd, and hardening his neck, he is suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy. Are none of you in danger of this? Are there not some of you who have not only been addressed by him, and frequently addressed; but also have been smitten by him, and awfully too; so that it would have seemed impossible for you to stand out. "I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." But canst thou stand before him! Can thy heart endure, or thy hand be



strong, when he shall deal with thee? How much better to be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live! Then will his repentings be kindled together. Then will he say, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented: and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

There is another extreme. Instead of despising, perhaps you are fainting. You are desponding. You are at your wits' end. You are tempted to curse the day of your birth. Life has lost all its charm—it is a burden too heavy for you to bear. You turn to solitude; but there grief preys upon itself. You think of intoxication; this is drowning misery in madness. You glance at infidelity; but annihilation may be a fiction, and the present only the beginning of sorrows. You resolve on suicide; but you cannot destroy yourself. You take the pistol, and shatter to pieces the tabernacle, and your friends are aghast at the ruins; but the inhabitant has escaped, and the spirit feels itself still in the grasp of God. I am far from insulting your grief. I sympathize with you; and rejoice that I can show unto you a more excellent way. "There is One standing among you, whom ye know not." Let me introduce him in all the fulness of his pity and power. He is equally able and willing to relieve you. He is the enemy of sin, but he is the friend of sinners. Cast thy burden upon the Lord: and say, Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. He will not, he cannot refuse thy application. For he has said, and is now saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." See Manasseh. He was stripped of all, and carried away captive. But his salvation sprang not from his prosperity, but his adversity. "When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." Think of the Prodigal. Plenty had ruined him. The famine, and the husks which the swine did eat, made him think of home—"How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise, and go to my father." And that father, while he was yet "a great way off, saw him, and had compassion upon him, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him;" and not only clothed and fed, but adorned and feasted him: and said, "Let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Despair not; but follow these examples, and you will be able to say, with the famous Athenian, "I should have been lost, had I not been lost;" and to sin with many a sufferer before you,

"Father, I bless thy gentle hand;  
How kind was thy chastening rod,  
That forced my conscience to a stand,  
And brought my wandering soul to God.

Foolish and vain, I went astray  
Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord:  
I left my guide, I lost my way;  
But now I love and keep thy word."

## LECTURE VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN HIS SPIRITUAL SORROWS.

"We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof."—Psalm cxxvii. 2.

WE now pass from the condition of the Christian, to his experience. We have contemplated the changes that may take place in his outward circumstances. We have viewed him in his prosperity and in his adversity; and have seen him carrying his religion along with him through all the varying scenes of human life.

But there are similar variations in "the inward man," "the hidden man of the heart." And these changes are no inconsiderable evidences of the reality of a work of grace, in distinction from religious pretensions. The picture of a tree is invariable; but the tree itself has its seasons. At one time it is leafless, and the sap, though not destroyed, retires into the roots. At another, it revives, and buds, and blossoms, and is filled with fruitfulness. I walk in my garden, and see the stones arranged there, always the same. But it is otherwise with the flowers and plants. And the reason is, because the former are dead, while the latter have in them a principle of life. And such is the difference between the form of godliness, and the power: between a man alive to God, and one that hath a name that he liveth, but is dead.

Let us proceed to the part of the Christian's experience which we are pledged to consider this morning. And here, I can easily imagine, that the subject itself will hardly appear necessary to some. They are rather surprised by the very fact, we have assumed, as a clear and common verity. Young converts often wonder to hear of the believer's sadness. They are often indulged with a peculiar kind and degree of consolation to allure them on, till, whatever difficulties they meet with, they feel themselves too much interested, and too far advanced, to think of retreating. Because, from a regard to their weakness, their enemies are restrained, they seem to conclude that they are destroyed; and because, in the novelty of their views and the liveliness of their feelings, their corruptions are but little noticed, they hope to be vexed with them no more. They therefore wonder to hear older Christians complaining of distraction in duty, and languor of zeal, and weakness of hope, and conflicts with doubts and fears. Thus it was with Israel "in the kindness of their youth." See them on the shore of the Red Sea. They rejoiced in the Lord, and sang his praise, and thought they had only to go forward and possess the pleasant land—ignorant of the wilderness between; and having no foreboding of the drought, and the bitter waters, and the fiery serpents, and the Amalekites and Moabites, and their long detentions, and their being led about, and their being turned back—by all of which the souls of the people were much discouraged because of the way.

But if there are some to whom the intimation of these sorrows is surprising, there are others to whom it will be relieving, if not delightful. For there are some who are distressed and perplexed, owing to apprehensions that their experience is *peculiar*. They think none ever had such vain thoughts, such dull frames, such woful depressions, as they often mourn over. Therefore, in their communings with their own hearts, they are led to ask, "If I am his, why am I thus?" and anxiously turning to others, in whom they repose more confidence than they can place in themselves, say,

"Ye that love the Lord indeed,  
Tell me, is it thus with you?"

Now these will not rejoice in the deficiencies and distresses of others; but it yields them encouragement to learn, that there are some who can sympathize with them; and that what they feel, is not, though grievous, incompatible, with a state of grace; since others, and even those who are far superior to themselves, utter the same sighs and groans.

To return. The Psalm from which the words of our text are taken, is universally admired. Indeed nothing can be more exquisitely beautiful. It is written in a strain of sensibility that must touch every soul that is capable of feeling. It is remarkable that Dr. Watts, in his excellent versification, has omitted it. He has indeed some verses upon it in his Lyrics; and many others have written on the same. We have seen more than ten productions of this kind. . . . But who is satisfied with any of these attempts?—Thus it begins: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." These rivers were probably some of the streams branching off from the Euphrates and Tigris. Here it is commonly supposed these captive Jews were placed by their taskmasters, to preserve or repair the water-works. But is it improper to conjecture that the Psalmist refers to their being here—not constantly, but occasionally; not by compulsion, but choice? Hither I imagine them retiring to unbend their oppressed minds in solitude. "Come," said one of these pious Jews to another, "Come, let us for a while go forth from this vanity and vileness. Let us assemble together by ourselves under the refreshing shade of the willows by the water-courses. And let us take our harps with us, and solace ourselves with some of the songs of Zion." But as soon as they arrive, and begin to touch the chords, the notes—such is the power of association—awaken the memory of their former privileges and pleasures. And overwhelmed with grief, they sit down on the grass; and weep when they remember Zion; their dejected looks, averted from each other, seeming to say, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; in I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." But what do they with their harps? The voice of mirth is heard no more; and all the daughters of music are brought low. Melody is not in season to a distressed spirit. "Is any afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms." "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart."—They did not, however, break them to pieces, or throw them into the stream—but *hanged* them up only. They hoped that what they could not use at present they might be able to resume at some happier period. To be cast down is not to be destroyed. Distress is not despondency.

"Beware of desperate steps; the darkest day,  
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."

"We *hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*" Let us pass from the Jew to the Christian; and let us survey the Christian,

In his SPIRITUAL SORROWS.

He who would preach well, says Luther, must distinguish well. It is peculiarly necessary to discriminate, when we enter upon the present subject. For all the sorrows of the Christian are not of the same kind or descent. Let us consider four sources of his moral sadness.

- I. Will be PHYSICAL.
- II. Will be CRIMINAL.
- III. Will be INTELLECTUAL.
- IV. Will be PIETIC.

The *first* source is PHYSICAL.

There are some who understand very little of this. They are blessed with a favored constitution; and can hardly enter into the feelings of those who pass much of their time under the dominion of a gloomy and depressive temperament that leads them to view every thing through an alarming and dismaying medium; and to draw towards themselves all that is awful and distressing. How affecting is it to hear a man of genius and piety complaining, that in one day, in one hour, he who was such an enthusiastical admirer of the works of nature, had presented to him an universal blank; so that nothing after, could ever charm him again. We admit that the case of Cowper was extraordinary; but it was so in the degree, rather than in the quality. Others are subject to a measure of the same influence; and while the increased prevalence of this morbid affection produces fixed melancholy, the slighter diffusion of it may be attended with the most trying irritation and depression. We often censure, where, if we knew all, we should only pity. What a conflict have some Christians even in wrestling with flesh and blood. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We know little of the mechanism of the body: but we know much less of the chemistry. Who can tell how the nervous juices and the animal spirits are secreted? Who can explain how the fluids blend and temper each other? Who knows how it is that when a particular humor predominates unequally, such a change is resistlessly produced in our mass of apprehensions and feelings? Yet we know the fact. We know that external things affect the body. We know that the body affects the mind. We know that we are the creatures of the season and of the sky. We know that we are not the same in a foggy day, as in a clear one. We know that if there be a suffusion of bile, the world, and the church, and the family, are not governed so well now, as they were yesterday. Nothing is so agreeable in our condition. Our very religion is doubtful; and God is not the same.

Several things result from this reasoning. It is not astonishing that many Christians will ascribe every animal variation and effect to the agency of Satan! Especially when they know how often, by the aid of a little medicine, all these supposed temptations have been chased away, and every thing restored to its proper hues and attractions again!

It is not necessary for a Christian to be a physician; but it is desirable for him to be able to distinguish between influences purely bodily, and the principles, disposition, and state of his mind. It is difficult to reason with people in this frame, or under this tendency; otherwise we should be amazed at the perplexity and disconsolateness of some excellent characters, and the readiness with which they refuse to be comforted. We have known persons, poor in spirit, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, glorying only in the cross of Christ, and cheerfully going forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach—yet gloomily concluding that they have no part nor lot in the matter, and that their heart is not right in the sight of God. And wherefore do they write these bitter things against themselves? There is no reason why they *should*; but the cause why they *do*, is to be found in something beyond the preacher's province. And till there is a change in the physical economy, all the succors of religion will be urged in vain.

Good men should also learn from hence to be attentive to their health, and keep the body as much as possible the fit medium of the mind. A man may be a good performer; but what can he do with a disordered instrument? The inhabitant may have



good eyes; but how can he see accurately through a soiled window? Keep therefore the glass clean; and the organ in tune. We do not wish you to be finical and fanciful; to live in the shop of an apothecary; or have a medical attendant always dangling at your heels. But be soberly and prudently attentive to the body. Rise early. Take proper exercise. Beware of sloth. Observe and avoid whatever disagrees with your system. Never overburden nature. Be moderate in your table indulgences. Let not appetite bemoir and clog the mind. Medical authority will tell you, that where one disorder arises from deficiency, a thousand spring from repletion; and that the Board slays far more than the Sword.—The

#### Second source is CRIMINAL.

It will be allowed that they who cannot apostatize may backslide; and we know who hath said, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee; and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God." Observe: it is both *evil* and *bitter*; evil in its nature, and bitter in its consequences. And these bitter effects take in, not only outward troubles, but inward distresses; the corrosions of fretfulness under a feeling of guilt; the reproaches of conscience awakened from its slumbers, and ashamed of its negligence; the perplexities arising from the doubtfulness of our condition: the loss of peace, and a sense of God's favor. What was said of Israel as a people, will apply here to individual experience. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments; then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness like the waves of the sea." You hear much of the hidings of God's face. The expression is perfectly Scriptural. "Make thy face," says David, "to shine upon thy servant." His face signifies his favorable regard. This can never be a matter of indifference to the Christian, whether we consider his supreme love to God, or his entire dependence upon him. He must be miserable under the loss of God's smiles. And as Absalom said, "What do I here in Geshur, unless I see the king's face?" So says the believer—What do I in the closet, or in the house of God, or at his table without him? I cannot improve a providence or an ordinance; I cannot enjoy my friends or myself, without my God. So it was with David. "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."

But why does he ever hide his face? Is it to display his sovereignty? No: but to testify his disapprobation of our spirit or our conduct. It is of the nature of moral correction. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

There are some who say—quoting the words of Scripture, but mistaking their design—God sees "no iniquity in Jacob, and beholds no perverseness in Israel." Yet we read of "the provoking of his sons and of his daughters." Yet "the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." And no importunity could obtain a relaxation of the sentence. "Sin never hurts a believer!" "He never need be afraid of sin!" And whose inspiration is this language? Where do we learn this doctrine? Did David believe it, after his transgression? Along with the very announcement of his pardon, was he

not informed of the sufferings that would still result from his guilt? Did he not continue to confess, "my sin is ever before me?" If not bruised and fractured by his fall, why does he pray, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice!" If not filled with a dread of divine abandonment, why does he say, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me?" If he had not been deprived of the consolation, why does he say, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit?" If he had not been struck dumb, why does he pray, "Open thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth thy praise?" If he had not impaired the cause of God, why does he pray, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem?"

Upon this principle, the chief hope I entertain with regard to some professors of religion, is their uncomfortableness. For it would be a sad symptom in their case, if they were tranquil, and cheerful, and rejoicing in Christ, while they are indifferent to the means of grace, and mind earthly things, and display such a worldly conversation and spirit. For I am sure of this, that if they really belong to God, he will rebuke them, and make them look back, with the exclamation, "O! that it was with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; while as yet the Almighty was with me." The way to see and enjoy God is to live near him, and to be always endeavoring to please him. The first Christians "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost." These are inseparable; and all pretensions to the latter without the former, are nothing but delusion. Let me, therefore, if the consolations of God are small with thee, ask, "Is there any secret thing with thee?" Thy gourd withers: Is there any worm at the root? You are repulsed, and turn your back on your enemies: Is there any accused thing in the camp? "Let us search and try our ways; and turn again unto the Lord." Let us do more.—Let us fall upon our knees, and pray for divine examination. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—The

#### Third source is INTELLECTUAL.

For the joy of a Christian is not a vain imagination or a groundless persuasion, endangered by inquiry—it flows from knowledge; and the possessor is able to give a reason of the hope that is in him. Hence it will follow, that though a Christian's safety does not depend upon the extent and the degree of his religious information, his comfort will be very much affected by it. Now there are some who are very defective in their acquaintance with the gospel; and these, like persons walking in darkness, or at least twilight, are afraid to tread firmly, and are liable to convert harmless objects into spectres of terror. Owing to a want of evangelical instruction from books or teachers, there is in them, a prevalence of legality that leads them to look after something in themselves wherein they may glory, or which shall entitle them to pardon and acceptance. Instead of resting in a mediator between God and them, they seek after something mediatorial, between Christ and them; and thus not coming to him, as they are, they wait till they shall possess certain qualifications, or perform certain conditions. Thus they labor in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity—for

"If we tarry till we're better,  
We shall never come at all,"

They set themselves a mark of attainment; and not being able to reach it, they are cast down. They mistake the degree of their experience for the ground of their hope; and their confidence varies with their frames. And as to their perseverance and final victory, their own vigilance and fidelity usurp their dependence, instead of the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. In the Lord they have righteousness and strength. His grace is sufficient for them; and were they to be only and always looking unto Jesus, their joy might be full and constant; but now they often go mourning all the day.

It is therefore of great importance to have the understanding well informed in "the way of salvation," that we "may know the things that are freely given to us of God." For as the gospel is glad tidings; and all its doctrines are *truths* and *facts*; the more distinctly we hear the one, and the more clearly we discern the other, the more effectual will be our relief, and the full assurance of our hope.—Peter admonishes Christians to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and we may consider the latter part of the injunction not only as additional to the former, but as explanatory of its import, and subservient to its performance. The one is necessary to the other.—We never shall grow in grace, but as we grow in knowledge, and in the knowledge of the Saviour.—We are well aware that there may be speculative knowledge without practical; but there cannot be practical without speculative. Every thing in religion is produced and supported and influenced by just views of things. And this is peculiarly the case with the consolation of the Spirit. Hence it is said, "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." Hence, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: in thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Hence also our Lord said to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." And again, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

Seek therefore "the riches of the full assurance of understanding." Gain clear and enlarged views of the nature and provisions of the glorious gospel; of the warrant and command we have to believe on the name of the Son of God; of the ground of our acceptance through the sacrifice and obedience of the Surety of the new covenant; of his ability to save to the uttermost; of the efficacy of his blood to cleanse from all sin; of the perfection of his righteousness to justify the ungodly, and give them a title to endless life; of the prevalency of his intercession within the veil; his changeless heart; his constant presence; his infinite fulness of grace; and our being blessed in him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Where shall I end? To be led into all this truth, is to be made to lie down in green pastures, and to be fed beside the still waters—to know all this love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, is to be filled with all the fulness of God.

Thus far, the sorrows which have been spoken of, we have been constrained to pity, or censure, or excuse. They have arisen from constitution, or moral infirmity, or ignorance.—But there are sorrows, which,

*Fourthly*, Have a *pious* source.

These are only experienced by those who are called a peculiar people. But they are familiar with them: and they feel them on various accounts. Let us view the Christian taking a four-fold prospect. He looks backward—and inward—and for-

ward—and around him: and at each look he weeps.

*First*. He looks *backward*, and weeps as he reviews the *past*. Some never review life; we mean, that they never review it for a religious purpose. They may look back occasionally and frequently, to see how they have missed their opportunity for securing some earthly advantage, or how they have been overreached by their fellow-creatures, in order to act a shrewder part in future: but not to become acquainted with their depravity; not to mark how long and how much they lived without God with them in the world.

But grace leads a man to reflect upon his former character and conduct; and to reflect properly. We say properly: for we have heard some professors of religion talk of their former wickedness with no very sorrowful emotions; yea, with a kind of complacency, as if they were relating some remarkable exploits. But how is the Christian affected with the retrospect? "Surely," says God, "I have heard Ephraim *bemoaning* himself thus—Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke—I was *ashamed*, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." How often did Paul, after his conversion, think of his previous state; and with what deep humiliation does he acknowledge his guilt. "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I was standing by, and consented unto his death, and I kept the raiment of them that slew him—I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious—I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." "When," says Baxter, "I reflect on my sins, I find it much easier to believe that God will forgive me, than I can forgive myself."

I enter a Christian's retirement. His eyes have been pouring out tears unto God. I ask him, "Why weepest thou?" "I have been taking a retrospect of the past. I have been examining my former years morally; and every view I take is humiliating and distressing. Time wasted—means neglected—faculties misimproved—injuries done to others by my advice, or example, or influence; and where in many cases the mischief cannot be repaired! I passed by the cross; and that which angels desire to look into, was nothing to me. He wooed and awed; blessed and chastised; and I set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproof—I violated a thousand resolutions. I resisted and conquered the most powerful conviction. I trampled under foot the Son of God, and did despite unto the Spirit of grace. For these things I weep."

*Secondly*. He looks *within*, and weeps as he examines the *present*. Let it be at once conceded, that grace makes the Christian to differ from his fellow-creatures, and from himself. It delivers him from the spirit of the world, and possesses him with the spirit which is of God. It calls him out of darkness into his marvellous light. It turns him from idols to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. He is a new creature. Old things are passed away; and all things are become new. But though he is really sanctified in every part, he is completely renovated in none. The good work is begun; but a thousand deficiencies urge him to pray, "Perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the works of thine own hands." Ask him now why he weeps. And you will hear him say, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that I cannot do the thing that I would. For what I would that I do not; but what I hate that I do. For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. I find



then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! Instead of advancing, I seem to be stationary—yea, going back in the heavenly life. What ingratitude under benefits! What incorrigibleness under rebukes! What unprofitableness under ordinances! My soul cleaveth unto the dust! What dullness, deadness, distractions, in attending upon the Lord! What little enjoyment in the things of God! The Sabbath returns, and leaves me as it finds me. I hear; but it is almost, if not altogether, in vain. I pray; but often seem at the throne of grace to forget my errand, and sometimes fall asleep there. I have promises that I cannot believe, and a God I cannot trust. He deserves all the confidence of my heart, and I treat him with the most unworthy suspicions—

“Sure, were not I most vile and base,  
I could not thus my friend requite:  
And were not he the God of grace,  
He’d frown and spurn me from his sight.”

—How mistaken are the people of the world. They often charge the Christian with antinomianism: they suppose that he embraces doctrines which favor licentiousness; and that he loves sin—when, could they witness him alone, where no one sees him and hears him but God, they would find him bewailing evils which are beneath their notice, and even infirmities which never strike their minds, for want of a holy susceptibility. But *his* conscience is so tender, that it resembles the eye, which is offended even with a mote. For a Christian feels all the remains of the sin that dwelleth in him. His new principles render it unavoidable. He who longs to advance, groans at every detention and delay; he who pants to excel, is mortified at little deficiencies; he who delights in purity, is offended with the least stain. It may be supposed, that under a perception of his failings, he will be unconcerned, if at the same time he is assured of his safety, and can repose on the certainty and permanency of the Saviour's love. But nothing can be more remote from the truth than this supposition: for it is *then* the Christian feels his imperfections the most painfully. The more he sees of the excellency and goodness of his Benefactor and Friend, the more he laments that he loves him no more, and serves him no better. This is godly sorrow. Thus a good man dying, when observed to weep profusely, said, “I weep not that my sins may be pardoned, but because I know they are pardoned.” This accords with the promise: “I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, *when* I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.”

*Thirdly.* He looks forward, and weeps as he surveys the future. Not that he is miserable because God does not admit him into the secrets of his providence, but keeps him ignorant of what a day may bring forth. He knows that all his times are in God's hands, and there he is willing to leave them.

But there are moral hazards sufficient to induce him to pass the time of his sojourning here in fear—not the fear of diffidence as to the truth of God's promises, or of uncertainty as to his final salvation; but a fear of moral circumspection and vigilance. Is there not enough to make him tremble as he moves on, lest he should enter into temptation?

Is there not enough to make him apprehensive, that he has to pass through an enemy's country, and that snares are every where laid for his feet? Does he not know that he carries within him the remains of unmortified passions—so that every thing he meets with from without may draw him aside? That even things harmless in themselves may occasion his falling? That characters far superior to himself have yielded in the hour of danger—and when no danger has been suspected? Is it not painful to think—that by one wrong step he may lose his evidences of heaven, distress and injure his brethren, and cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of; and induce the adversaries of the Lord to blaspheme? Is it not painful to think—that after all his professions of attachment, he may yet by his sin pierce the dear bosom on which his soul leans, and grieve the Holy Spirit by which he is sealed unto the day of redemption? Is it not enough to make him sigh—to think that as long as he remains here, he will never appear before One he infinitely loves, without carrying into his presence so much of that which he infinitely hates? Is it not enough to make him groan—being burdened—to think that the leprosy is so inherent and inseparable, that the walls of the house itself must be pulled down and lie under ground for ages, before it can be re-edified, and become an habitation for God through the Spirit?

*Fourthly.* He looks around him, and weeps as he beholds others. Fools make a mock at sin; but they that are wise know that it is exceeding sinful, and say, with David, “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved.”

Is he a citizen? He is a patriot. He sighs and cries for all the abominations that are done in the midst of the land. For he knows that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is the reproach of any people.

Is he a minister? O, how distressing is it to look down upon those who, after the labor of twenty years, remain the same; yea, who wax worse and worse; to know that he is only preaching them blind, and deaf, and impenitent: and to think that he is destined to be a swift witness against many that he would gladly save. “I have told you often,” says Paul, “and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.” “Give glory to the Lord your God,” says Jeremiah, “before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.”

Is he a member of a church? “He is sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and the reproach of it is his burden.”

Is he a relation? “How,” says he, with Esther, “can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?” Of those living in the same house, sitting at the same table, endeared by all the impressions and attractions of breeding and of birth? Can a wife, without anxiety and anguish, see a husband, otherwise amiable and kind, refusing to hear the word of life, and resolved not to receive the love of the truth, that he might be saved? Can a parent, with unbroken heart, see a child in the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death? We sympathize with bereaved fathers and mothers. Yet we ought even to hail those who have buried early hopes, compared with those whose offspring are

living, but erroneous and infidel and wicked. Oh! *Rachael*, "refrain thy voice from weeping; and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. There is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to thine own border." "Weep ye not for the dead, neither be-moan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country." O ye ungodly! how unreasonable, how unjust are your reflections! You often reproach Christians for their sorrows, when you yourselves in the various relations of life occasion a large number of them. For they see the danger you see not, and weep for you when you weep not for yourselves.—Have any of you connections that are godly? And have you grieved them? Resolve immediately to end this cruel persecution. Retire and pray. "O God of my sister, be my God! God of my parents, be my God!" Let not thy father longer repeat in vain, "My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." O hasten and ingenuously wipe away the tears of her who has long been saying, "What, my son, and the son of my womb, and the son of my vows?" Yea, let them have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh their bowels in the Lord.

Such are the sorrows which arise from a pious source. These are not only compatible with grace, but spring from gracious principles and dispositions. They are not only found in religious people, but are religious. And we cannot conclude without encouraging, and commending them.

We are aware that this is not the way in which they are commonly treated. The subjects of these spiritual griefs are generally despised, or deplored. Commonly, as soon as persons begin to discover any tendency to these sorrows, they are men wondered at; and they are considered as likely to become melancholy or deranged. But the prodigal lost his senses when he left his father's house, and came to himself when he resolved to return. And what but a carnal mind that is enmity against God, can lead a man to justify or excuse sorrow in all other instances, and degrade and vilify it here? What is the loss of property to the loss of the soul? What is the burning of a house, or the loss of a limb, to the casting of both body and soul into hell? What evil can we bewail that deserves a thought, compared with sin; in its guilt; in its pollution; the miseries it entails; the God it dishonors; the Saviour it crucifies? Bunyan remarks, that when he was awakened to consider his condition, nothing amazed him so much as to see how much men were affected with their temporal inconveniences and troubles. "These," says he, "had no power now to interest me. All my concern was absorbed in something infinitely more weighty—what must I do to be saved?" And he is a fool, even judged at the tribunal of reason, who does not feel the same difference—if this book be true.

If, however, such persons escape scorn, they are sure to be pitied. They are regarded as strangers to every thing like enjoyment, and are considered as passing all their lives in mopishness and dread. But they no more deserve our commiseration than our contempt. They are to be pitied who have their portion in this life, which we spend as a shadow, and possess nothing to carry away with them into another world a few weeks hence—who can speak every language but the language of Canaan—who are familiar with the stars, those orbs of light, and are plunged into the blackness of darkness for ever—who are caressed by worms, but are an abomination to the Lord—who are placed on a stream, and are gladdened with the flowers of the bank, and charmed with the music on board, and the gliding down into the gulf of perdition—these we pity; but

not those who are weary and heavy laden—not those who are invited by the Saviour to partake of his rest—not those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven—not those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled—not those that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Though their life may be deemed not only madness, but misery, it *allows* of happiness, and there is a blessedness arising from it. We cannot make out this to the comprehension of a natural man.—It is a mystery to him how we "become fools that we may be wise:" how, when we "are weak, we are strong:" how, "though sorrowful, we are yet always rejoicing." Yet so it is. There is pleasure even in these sorrows; and there is nothing so painful to a Christian as a hard, unfeeling heart. His weeping moments are his most welcome; and he is never more at home than when looking on him whom he has pierced, and mourning for him. This yields him evidence. It is a token for good. It is a proof that he is the subject of that divine agency which takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh—that he is the heir of that promise, "they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." Observe the words of the apostle: "The sorrow of the world worketh death; but godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life, and needeth not to be repented of." Of how many of your griefs are you now ashamed! How unworthy do they now appear of the concern they once gave you! But you will never repent of a tear you shed upon the Bible, or a groan you utter at the foot of the cross. It allows, it justifies every hope. He is faithful who promised: and what has he said?—"To that man will I look, even to him who is poor, of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."—"They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Yes, the Saviour is appointed "unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Their comforter is the God of all comfort; and he will soon wipe away all tears from their eyes, and the days of their mourning shall be ended.

But, "wo to you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep." As there is a sorrow connected with joy, so there is a joy that forebodes sorrow; issues in sorrow; is no better than sorrow disguised. Such are the pleasures of sin for a season. Such are all worldly enticements and dissipations. You boast of these. But one who had a much greater experience of them than you, and was much more honest and ingenuous, makes no scruple to say, that "even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." He said "of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it?" You may profess nothing like this; but while you wear smiles, the vulture is gnawing within. While you celebrate the day of your birth, you wish you had never been born. What have you to do with pleasure? "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Yield no longer to the temptation, which led many, in the days of Malachi, to say, "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" Tell the enemy that he is a liar; that godliness is profitable unto all things, and especially in its griefs. Tell him that this is the high road to safety and satisfaction, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

And take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,



saying, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you." "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

"Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times." "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." Amen.

### LECTURE IX.

#### THE CHRISTIAN, IN HIS SPIRITUAL JOYS.

*"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is our strength."*—NEHEMIAH viii. 10.

My brethren: some tell us, that religion has nothing to do with the passions. If it were necessary to refute such a notion, we could appeal even to the style of the Scriptures. When an author intends only to convince the judgment, he expresses himself plainly, and merely reasons. But when he means to affect, as well as to inform; when he wishes to strike, and excite, and to carry along the feelings with the convictions; he is never satisfied with simple representation—his language unavoidably avails itself of circumstances, and qualities, and imagery. And can any one deny that this is the mode perpetually employed by all the sacred writers?

But we observe also, that such a view of religion is not adapted to our very nature. Our passions are original parts of our being, and designed to be the impulses of action. And the Christian does not destroy, but sanctifies and employs, the man. And what passion is there, for which religion does not find a place and an object? Is it anger? "Be ye angry and sin not." Is it hatred? "Abhor that which is evil." Is it fear? "Be not high minded, but fear." Is it sorrow? "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." Is it pity? "Have compassion one for another." Is it love? "O love the Lord, all ye his saints." Is it joy? "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

We are aware that there is a great deal of what may be justly called strange fire offered on the altar of piety. We are not therefore pleading for a zeal without knowledge; but we are not satisfied with a knowledge without zeal. We do not wish for the heat and ravings of the fever, but for the genial warmth and glowing stimulus that pervade the whole system, when the body is in full health; knowing that what is cold and benumbed and unaffected by application and friction, is nigh unto death, or is palsied already. While therefore we acknowledge that there is such a thing as real enthusiasm, the admission shall not drive us to take up with a religion that consists in nothing but speculative opinions, and lifeless ceremonies, and formal duties. Religion is indeed a practical thing: but it is also experimental. It does include doctrinal truths; but in the Christian, these become principles. They descend from the head into the heart; and there grace reigns through righteousness unto everlasting life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have viewed the Christian's sadness: we are now to witness his joy. We have seen him hanging his harp on the willows; but he now takes it down, and proves that *the joy of the Lord is his strength*.

The words which introduce our subject were spoken on a very memorable occasion. All the people were gathered together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to all Israel. And "upon the first day of the seventh month, Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; and when he had opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord. And all the people answered, Amen, amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord, with their faces to the ground. So Ezra and his assistants read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." The power of God seems to have been peculiarly present. The whole assembly "wept when they heard the words of the law." *"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry: for the joy of the Lord is your strength."*

When he says, *This day is holy unto our Lord*, he means that it was a sacred festival. When he says, *Go your way*, he means that they should return home, and refresh themselves; for now noon was begun, and they had been standing for hours to hear the reading and expounding of the law. He does not forbid them the delicacies which they had provided for the solemnity, and which were distinguishable from their ordinary meals—*Eat the fat, and drink the sweet*—But all this was to be accompanied with two things.

*First, Liberality* towards the indigent and destitute, who would find nothing to regale them, when they returned to their humble dwellings. *And send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.* By the law of Moses, the poor, the fatherless, the widows, and the strangers within the gate, were all to be entertained on these festive occasions; and if they could not provide for themselves, I will not say their betters, but their superiors, were to replenish them. In accordance with the spirit of this statute is the intimation of our Lord to the person who had invited him to his house. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the lame, the maimed, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."—The very thing that his professed followers are constantly doing!! The same rule is enjoined in religious fasting as well as feasting. "Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen—to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Well therefore does the Apostle say, "Let all your works be done with charity." O! what a lovely religion do we profess; and what a church, what a world shall we have, when those who profess it will throw off, with execration, the detestable habits of avarice and selfishness, hoarding and extravagance; and living according to its admonitions, instead of practically insulting them as they now do, will easily and cheerfully furnish a

sufficiency for all the exigencies of sacred and civil beneficence!

*Secondly, with Cheerfulness. Neither be ye sorry*—Not that sorrow is improper in itself, or absolutely forbidden; but it was now unseasonable, and every thing is beautiful in its time. Joy becomes a feast. And this joy, says Nehemiah, is as important as it is becoming—for the joy of the Lord is your strength—it will strengthen your bodily frame; and what is more, it will renew the strength of your souls, so that you shall mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.

Let us contemplate the Christian

I. In the DIVINITY; and

II. In the UTILITY of the JOY.

I. The DIVINITY of it.

—It is the *joy of the Lord*. So it is called by the Judge of all, in his address at the last day. "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Now, this joy enters the Christian; and as he is so contracted a vessel, he cannot contain much; but then, he will enter the joy, and he will find it a boundless ocean. The dawn is nothing compared with the day; yet the one always results in the other; and "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The dawn also arises from the same sun as the day; and this joy is divine, not only in its completion, but in its progress and even commencement—it is the *joy of the Lord*.

The *joy of the Lord*, means religious joy. But there is always a reason for the language of Scripture; and we lose much, by not remarking the beauty and energy of "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." It is the joy of the Lord in every view he can take of it.

—His, in the *authority* that binds it upon us as a duty. He has commanded it. He has done this virtually in enjoining many things which necessarily pre-suppose and require it. But he has expressly enjoined the joy itself; and in terms of peculiar extent and degree—"Rejoice evermore." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

—His, in the *assurance* which holds it forth as a privilege. His purpose could have taken effect without a promise; but in this case we could not have known his thoughts towards us; nor have walked by faith; nor have lived in hope; nor have pleaded his own engagement in prayer. But now we can go to him and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said. Fulfil the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope." The promises of men are vain and false like themselves, and often make us ashamed of our hope. But the Lord is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? And has he not said, "The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away?" "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." The assurance is also confirmed by an oath. And, "because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

—His, in the *resemblance* it bears to his own. Christians are "partakers of the divine nature." They are "partakers of his holiness." As far as they are renewed, his views are their views, and his dispositions are their dispositions. When John says, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother had need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—by the love of God he means obviously a love like God's. As if he should say, God gave his own Son for his enemies; and this wretch will not give a little of his substance for the relief of one, who is bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Now the same may be said of this joy. Did the joy of the Prodigal himself surpass that of the father, when he said, "Let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found?" Do we feel the joy of God's salvation? He feels it too; and this salvation is called "the pleasure of the Lord." If it be more blessed to give than to receive, what must be the pleasure of Him who "openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing?" But you share in this pleasure, in doing good. Is he "ready to pardon;" and does he "delight in mercy?" You may taste the same delight in the exercise of cordial forgiveness. Doth the "Lord take pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy?" So does the Christian. In them is "all his delight." Does the Lord call his Son his "Elect, in whom his soul delighteth?" And "to them that believe he is precious." What a commendation! To have the same end, and the same way with God! To choose what He chooses! To pursue what He pursues! To relish His happiness! To have His joy fulfilled in themselves!

—His, in the *subject*. The material of it, so to speak, is found in him, and in him alone. As the dove returned into the ark because she could find no rest for the sole of her foot, so it is impossible for the mind of man to know any true satisfaction till he says with David, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Though, as a fallen creature, he is alienated from the life of God, he retains the same relation to him, as his portion; and having been made capable of communion with God, and designed for it, he is necessarily miserable without it. He may forget his resting place; but he can find no substitute for it. He may debase himself into a congeniality with the lowest gratifications: but for happiness he must draw near to God as his exceeding joy. With him is the fountain of life. And there is enough in him to bless us, whatever be our wants, or our capacities of enjoyment. And therefore, says the Christian, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." In him I have a shelter from every storm; a support under every load. The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Am I guilty? "With him there is plenteous redemption." He was angry with me, but his anger is turned away, and he comforteth me. And what comfort can be compared with that which arises from the thought, that I am reconciled unto God by the death of his Son? That I am accepted in the Beloved? Do I want ability to "travel all the length of the celestial road," and a title to heaven when I arrive? "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of his righteousness, even of his only." All his relations are mine. He is my physician, my friend, my shepherd, my father. All his perfections are mine—his wisdom, his power, his mercy, and his truth. All the dispensations of his providence, all the treasures of his word, are mine. All his grace, all his glory is mine. "I will greatly



rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness: as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Is this exultation excessive? There can be no excess here. As the Lord himself is the source of this joy, the joy passeth all understanding. And the meek shall increase their joy in the Lord for ever and ever, because the subject of it is not only perfect but infinite.

—His, finally, in the *production*. In vain is provision, however suitable and rich, spread within our view, if it be placed beyond our reach. Observe the language of God with regard to Ephraim: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws; and I laid meat unto them." The former was as necessary as the latter: while the mouth of the ox was muzzled, the nearness of the food would only tantalize and distress. What we mean by the allusion is this: There may be reasons for rejoicing when yet no joy is experienced: for the mourner may be unable to lay hold of them, and appropriate them to his own use. Asaph saw his safety, but felt his inability to reach it without the aid of him who had provided it. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." David therefore says, "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." And he prays, "Rejoice the soul of thy servant." And he acknowledges, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." And who can put it there, if he does not? Can conscience? Can a Christian friend? Can a minister; even a Barnabas, a son of consolation? "When he maketh peace, then who can make trouble? And when he hideth his face, then who can behold him, whether it be done against a nation or a man only?" Means are to be used; but the agency that renders them effectual is the Lord's. Our sleep would not refresh us without the divine blessing. Our food does not nourish us; but "every word proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

And if this be true in natural things, is it less so in spiritual? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo? Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. He is therefore called the "God of all comfort." And he is so called, not only to forbid our confidence in creatures, but to enlarge our expectations from himself, by bringing an Almighty Creator of succor and refreshment into view, in our difficulties and sorrows. It says, I, even I, am he that comforteth you. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? However dark the scene, if he says, Let there be light, all shall be irradiated. However rough the winds and waves, if he says, Peace, be still, there shall be a great calm. He can turn the shadow of death into the morning. He can plant the hope of glory in the very bosom of despair. What he does not find, he can produce. If there be no pre-existent materials, he can create. *Nothing* hears his voice, and yields a world of life and plenty and bliss. He calleth those things which be not, as though they were. He is the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations.—Let us consider,

## II. THE UTILITY OF THIS JOY.

For it is not only divine, but efficacious; and efficacious, because divine. The joy of the Lord is your *strength*. To know the force of an argument, we apply it. To know the power of an implement, we make trial of it. To ascertain the strength of a man, we compare him with others; we task him with some exertion; we judge by the difficulty of the work which he achieves, and especially by the might of opposition he overcomes. Let us exa-

mine this joy. Let us bring it to six tests—some of them very severe ones. And let us see what it can do for the Christian—in his profession of religion—in his concern to recommend it to others—in the discharge of duty—in his perils—in his sufferings—and in death.

*First*, Let us review the Christian in his *profession* of religion. That this profession is required of us, it is hardly necessary to prove. In one place we are commanded to "hold fast our profession." In a second, to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." In a third, we are represented not only as "believing with the heart unto righteousness, but as confessing with the mouth unto salvation." In a fourth, our Master tells us, that if we "deny him, he will also deny us;" and that of those who "are ashamed of him and of his words, he will be ashamed when he comes in the clouds of heaven with the holy angels." So necessary is it, not only that we should be what we appear, but appear what we are. The religion of Jesus is so perfectly true and excellent, that it will bear any kind of exhibition. And it demands examination. And it is the more beneficial the more it is known.

Now let us see how the joy of the Lord affects this profession. It is the very strength of it. For in proportion as a man possesses it, he feels satisfied with his portion: he glories in his choice; he is ready to avow it. And if it should occasion him some privations or sacrifices which may lead the enemy to reproach him, "Where is now your God?" he feels more than indemnified already; and can say with the apostle, "for which cause I suffer these things: Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which is committed to him against that day." David found God's testimonies his delight and his counsellor; and therefore he could say, "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed."

There is a great difference between godly sorrow and godly joy. When we feel the former, we naturally seek to elude observation; we retire to weep, and the eye pours out tears unto God. But joy is stirring and manifestative. It says to them that are in darkness, "Show yourselves." To the prisoners, "Go forth"—and they "go forth with joy, and are led forth in peace." We can appeal to the experience of many of you. How long did you carry a wounded and a bleeding conscience, before you laid open the distress to any creature-inspection. It was otherwise when the desire was accomplished. When he commanded deliverance for you; when you were made free indeed; you could no longer conceal your emotions. You then said, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings: I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent; O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever." It was the loss of his joy, that made David dumb. He therefore prays, "Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."—Let us therefore observe the Christian,

*Secondly*, In his *concern to recommend religion* to others. Real godliness shows itself not only personally, but socialiy. It must begin at home; but it can never end here. He will not value the sou'

of another who despises his own; but an earnestness for our own salvation involves principles that must make us anxious to save all that are around us. We shall therefore say to them, as Moses said to Hobab, "We are journeying towards a place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Now of this it is easy to see that the joy of the Lord is the strength. It is this that gives us confidence in our addresses. We speak not from conjecture, or from opinion, but experience. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." It is this that gives earnestness to our invitations. We have something suitable and valuable to recommend. We do not ask persons to a barren entertainment. We have a rich abundance; and we have found the plenty after we were perishing ourselves; and knowing that others are still in the same condition, we resemble the lepers at Samaria, who said, "This day is a day of good things, and we hold our peace. If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will befall us; now therefore come, that we may tell the king's household." He is the man to say to others, "O taste and see that the Lord is good," who has himself tasted that he is gracious, and from his own enjoyment can say, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

This also adds conviction and force to our testimony and commendation. Men see what our religion has done for us, and what it can do for them also. Will any thing recommend a master more than the cheerfulness of his servants? When they constantly sing at their work, is it not a proof that they do not find it an irksome, wearisome thing to serve him? All are looking out for happiness; and if they see that you have found what others in every direction miss; that while others, like fools, are running up and down the earth, asking, "Who will show us any good?" your heart is set at rest; that while others are full of complaint, you are filled with praise; that while they are enlarging their desires as hell, you learn to be content with such things as you have; troubled, yet not distressed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, and yet possessing all things—must not this induce them to say, "This is the seed which the Lord hath blessed?" Will not this move them to take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you?

Wo to the world because of offences, says the Saviour. And professors should remember, these offences are various and many. The way of truth may be evil spoken of, not only by your immoral conduct, but by your perverse disposition; and by your unlovely temper; and by your sullenness, and mopishness, and gloom, and fear. Your delicate regard for the honor of the gospel should lead you to attend to the command of your Lord, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." But when you are unable to suppress sorrowful and desponding feelings, should you not endeavor to conceal them? "I was ashamed," says Ezra, "to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him." Now confidence in God was not incompatible with his asking for such assistance; but it was likely to operate strangely and injuriously on the mind of this pagan monarch; and because it would look like suspicion and apprehension, he avoided the very appearance of evil.

Thirdly, Let us view the Christian in the discharge of his duties. These are numerous, and extensive, and difficult; and he is required to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. And here, too, the joy of the Lord is his strength. It is well known that fear chills; despondency unnerves; sorrow depresses. But hope is encouragement. It is energy. It is the main-spring of action. It sets and keeps the world in motion. Joy inspires; excites; elevates. It renders our work, our privilege. It throws off the dullness and formality in our holy exercises. We not only have life, but have it more abundantly. The absence of this joy is a kind of winter; and then we are not only dark, but barren; not only cold, but lifeless. But the return of it makes the spring; and again the earth teems, and the field and garden are all movement, and the trees are blossom, and the air all song. David understood this, and therefore said, "Then will I run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt have enlarged my heart." Bunyan knew this, and therefore he releases his Pilgrim from his burden; and so, not only delights him by the relief, but prepares him for the better and more successful execution of his journey.—From this load persons are not all discharged at the same time; and some carry it long. But it is an hindrance, as well as a distress; and favored is he who is early delivered, and can lightsomely advance in the way everlasting.

Some seem afraid to administer the consolations of the glorious gospel fully, as if they would have, if not a licentious, yet a paralyzing effect on the receiver. But these timid dispensers of divine truth, though they may be well meaning, are not well informed. They are ignorant of the very principles of our nature; and know very little of the comforts of the Holy Ghost—or they would know that these comforts are not opiates, but cordials—that while they refresh, they also animate. If there must be any thing of an extreme, (for which, however, we do not plead,) it would be better for the leaning to be on the side of privilege than of legality, even with regard to practical religion. Such a man, grateful for his indulgences, at the feet of his Benefactor as well as Master, will feel himself much more disposed and bound to dedicate himself to his service; and his language must be, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

Fourthly, Let us view the Christian in his perils. He is perpetually surrounded with temptations in the world. These flatter him, and would entice him away from God. And these he is to resist, steadfast in the faith. But how is this to be done? By threatening? By constraints? These may indeed induce him actually to refuse the offers and allurements; but not in effection. The joy of the Lord is his strength; and without this, a man will only leave the world as Lot's wife left Sodom—she left it, but her heart was still in the place; and she inwardly sighed, O that I was there! O that I could return, and not be destroyed! Thus there are some who forsake the world, as far as they are impelled by the fear of hell, or the dread of reproach or shame of inconsistency; but they hate the obligation that keeps them back from their loved indulgences; and, like wasps burnt out of their nests, are angry and resentful towards all around them, for the injuries they have endured. Prohibition, so far from killing desire, has a tendency to increase it; sin takes occasion by the commandment; and that which was ordained to be unto life, proves to be unto death. The Christian is not saved from the world by the law, but by grace. He is not driven out of it against his inclination—he leaves it voluntarily; and gives proof of it; for



truly if he were mindful of the country from whence he came out, he would have opportunities to return. He has the same allurements and seductions presented to him, as others. But here is the difference; they are alive to them, but he is dead. He has found something infinitely superior; this, by refining and exalting his taste, has weaned him; and he can no longer relish the mean and ignoble provision of former days. Having found the pure spring, he no longer kneels to the filthy puddle. Having tasted the grapes of Eshcol, he longs no more for the leeks, and garlic, and onions of Egypt. The palace makes him forget the dunghill.

This, this is the way, and the only effectual way of separating the heart from the world; it is to subdue the sense of an inferior good, by the enjoyment of a greater. Who would exchange the green pastures and still waters for barrenness and drought? Who wants lamps, or even stars, when the sun is up?

‘As by the light of opening day  
The stars are all concealed;  
So earthly pleasures fade away  
When Jesus is revealed.’

This joy exorcises a man of carnal affection: and we are persuaded the efficacy of it is far greater to mortify us to the world, than the influence of afflictions. Losses and disappointments may surprise and confound us, and lead us to lament the uncertainty of every thing below; but they do not make us feel their unsatisfactory and polluted nature. Even under the pressure of their trials, and amidst all their complaints, you will often discern the disposition of the sufferers remaining unchanged. And if not, how soon *after* does renewed pursuit succeed deplored deceptions, and men flee to a repetition of similar experiments, till all the mad career is ended! But the experience produced by the sight of the cross, and communion with God in Christ, will never allow the world to become again the Christian's end, or portion. If by the power of delusion he be drawn astray for a moment, he will soon find that it is not with him as in months past: and he will be sure to feel the wretchedness of what he has chosen, compared with the glory of what he has left. And this feeling will serve to recall him. The *apostate* has no such experience as this to check and turn him. But the *backslider* has: and see the result—"I will go," says the church, "and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now."

*Fifthly*, We shall see that the joy of the Lord is his strength, if we view the Christian in his *sufferings*. Here we might lead you back, and call to your remembrance the former times. We might show you the glorious army of martyrs tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. We might show you Peter and John, after being scourged, departing from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. We might show you the Hebrews taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and men, and women, and youths, severing from their friends who hung on their necks, willing to go to prison and to death. I might show you Bradford, who, when the keeper's wife, weeping, said to him, "O sir, I am come with heavy tidings—you are to be burnt to-morrow; and they are gone into the city to buy the chain;" taking off his hat and laying it upon the ground, and kneeling and raising his hands, he said, "Lord, I thank thee for this honor. This is what I have been waiting for, and longing for."

Such scenes as these, owing to the laws of the land, we are not called to witness. With us, persecution is not national; is not legal. We can sit under our own vine and fig-tree, none daring to

make us afraid. Yet there are instances of private and personal wrongs beyond the prevention of law. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and the tongue can no man tame. We have seen servants deprived of their places; and workmen of their employment; and tradesmen of their custom. We have seen wives and children enduring privations, and insults, and outrage. We have seen the follower of the Lamb, bearing his reproach, scorned by his companions, and deserted by his friends—yet acting with decision and consistency, and practically saying, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear, so that I but finish my course with joy." And why have they not been overcome? Why have they not partially yielded? They were filled with everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. "The joy of the Lord was their strength."

But afflictions of any kind may supply the place of persecution, and try every religious principle.—We talk of martyrs. What martyrs have endured, what some Christians have been called in private life to suffer month after month, and year after year—a great part of the heart's bitterness perhaps known only to themselves! Yet, under bodily anguish, and family bereavements, and the cruelty of connections, and reductions in life the most humiliating, we have witnessed them—not raging against instruments, not cursing the day of their birth, not impeaching the providence of God, not charging him unkindly; but looking upward and meekly saying, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Not insensible, yet more than resigned—not undervaluing the comforts of which they have been stripped, yet exulting, "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

*Finally*, It is hardly needful to say, this joy of the Lord is the Christian's strength *in death*. For what but this *can* be his support then? Then lover and friend must fail him. Then the keepers of the house tremble. Then desire fails. What can nature do here? or nature's light? or nature's religion? But in the multitude of his thoughts within him—and what a multitude of thoughts will beset a dying man!—God's comforts delight his soul. The world passeth away; but the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The outward man perisheth; but the inward man is renewed. He looks at his trembling limbs, and feels his fainting heart. His heart and his flesh faileth: but God is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. He looks forward, and sees enough to dismay all mortal courage—but, says he, "my shepherd's with me there." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

And now what says our subject in a way of practical improvement?

—It says, *Enquire what your joy is*. Is it the joy of the Lord? For there is the joy of the sinner.—And we read of the pleasures of sin: these are for a season; and as they are soon over, so they leave nothing but stains and stings behind. We read of the joy of the hypocrite, and are told that it is but for a moment; because at death he must be detected, and may be laid open much sooner. There is the joy of the Pharisee, who trusts in himself that he is righteous and despises others, and even glories before God. Some are said to rejoice in a thing of nought. Such are all worldlings: for all that cometh is vanity; and honors and riches and power

are but to them, as so many toys or flowers thrown into the vehicle, that is conveying the condemned criminal to the place of execution.

Now it matters little which of these joys characterizes you, if you are a stranger to the joy of which we have been speaking. But allow me, in reference to your choice, to remind you of the language of Solomon. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness. I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it?" Yes, this is the question—What doth it?—You have seen what the joy of the Christian can do?—But what doth yours? Does it purify your passions? Does it make you happy alone? Does it afford you any thing like satisfaction? Does it bear you up under the trials of life? Does it raise you above the dread of death and eternity? Has it any constant source? any solid foundation? Is it not the creature of ignorance? Are you not afraid to let in one ray of divine truth upon it? Would not one serious thought of God and of another world strike it dead upon the spot? "I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Therefore thus said the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

—It says, *See how greatly religion is libelled.* You well know that it is commonly represented as at variance with every thing like pleasure; and nothing can be more injurious than such a representation, especially to the young, who are so alive to happiness. But can any thing be so unfounded and false as this vile and repulsive opinion? Surely God is able to make a man happy; and is it therefore reasonable to suppose that he will suffer one who neglects and hates him to be happier than one who loves and serves him? Has my hoping and believing that death is the gate of life; that heaven is my home; that God is my father; that all things are working together for my good; a tendency to prevent or diminish my enjoyment of the beauties of nature, and the bounties of providence, and the intercourses of life? But if the Scriptures are allowed to decide, and they contain the judgment of the only wise and true God, we know that wisdom's ways "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is every one that retaineth her." And in this testimony every partaker of divine grace acquiesces. It would be in vain to appeal to others. They have not made the trial; but these have. And these will tell you, that they know nothing of bondage. To them his service is perfect freedom. They find his yoke easy, and his burden light. They will tell you that they were strangers to real pleasure as long as they were without Christ; but since their knowledge of Him, their common mercies have been sweetened; their very sorrows have been blessed; and they prefer their own lowest estate, to all the glory and goodness of the world.

—It says, *What an inducement is here to seek the Lord and his strength, to seek his face evermore.* Joy is a thing to which none are indifferent. All are contriving or laboring to acquire something in which they may rejoice. But here the blessing is. Here is a joy that deserves the name. A joy soft as the ether of Paradise, and pure as the river of life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb—

the hidden manna—the bread of heaven—angels' food—yea, more—for

"Never did angels taste above  
Redeeming grace and dying love."

And can you do without this joy? If you can dispense with it while every thing prospers—what will you do in the day of adversity? If you can dispense with it in the smiles of youth—what will you do, in the decays and privations and depressions of age? If you can dispense with it in the excitements of society—what will you do, in the dreariness of solitude? If you can dispense with it in the attractions of life—what will you do, in the loneliness of death? If you can dispense with it in a world of engrossment and diversions—

"O ye gay dreamers of gay dreams,  
How will you weather an eternal night  
Where such expedients fail?"

—But do you not *now* feel your need of it? However successful, however indulged, however amused, do you not *now* feel a void within which this alone can fill—a craving which this alone can relieve—a restlessness which this alone can soothe and calm? And is it not attainable? Is there not one, among all your dissatisfactions and disquietudes, now saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

—It says, *Your religion is to be suspected, if you are habitually destitute of joy.* Here we readily exclude all constitutional cases, such as we have admitted in the former Lecture: there is no reasoning from these. We also limit our intimation by observing, that it does not extend to that joy which springs from strong confidence, or the full assurance of hope. With regard to this, every one whose heart is right with God will prize it and desire it.—But we have known many who have possessed very little of it through life, and yet have given undeniable proof that they are renewed in the spirit of their mind. But this is only one view of the Christian's joy, or rather one kind of it. There are other, and many other sources of sacred delight. There are the pleasures of divine knowledge; the pleasures of hope; the pleasures of review, in looking back upon the way by which the Lord has led us; the pleasures arising from attendance on the means of grace; the pleasures arising from congeniality with the things of the Spirit, and which makes it our meat to do the will of our heavenly Father; the pleasures arising from the approbation of conscience; and the pleasures of usefulness. There are persons who are ready to exclude themselves from the gladness of God's nation, and yet their eye sparkles with pleasure when they see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and hear that the word of the Lord has free course and is glorified. But are they strangers to the joy of the Lord?

—It says, *Let this joy be a peculiar object of attention to every Christian.*—Let him never forget that it is his strength.

If therefore he has lost it, let him not rest till he has regained it. Let him hasten back to the place where he slept and dropped his roll. Let him repent and do his first works.

Though his state be secure, let him remember that his comfort may vary and decline; and therefore let him guard against every thing that may wound his peace, and grieve the Holy Spirit, and interrupt his communion with God.

Some of you know the worth of this joy from the want, rather than from the experience. You are not strangers to the nature of it; but the degree in which you possess it, is far below your duty and



your privilege. Let me beseech you, as you value your own welfare, and the honor of your God, to seek, immediately and earnestly, an increase of it.

And for this purpose, suffer the word of exhortation. Commune with your own heart, and insist upon a reason for your distress; saying with David, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?" Maintain intercourse with the wise and experienced. Two are better than one. Jonathan went to David in the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. One Christian is frequently to another like the angel to Hagar—she was ready to die of thirst with water near her; but he opened her eyes and showed her the well. "Retire and read thy Bible, to be gay." Peruse much the Scriptures, which are filled with words good and comfortable. Acquaint yourselves with the method of salvation—the freeness and plenitude of divine grace—the ground of our acceptance—and all the provision made, not only for our safety but consolation. Pay much attention to the ordinances of God. His ministers are helpers of your joys. He is known in his palaces for a refuge. According to your conduct here, you will be vouchers, both for the promise and the threatening; "Them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Be much in prayer. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. We read of the joy of faith. Look after more of this all-important principle. You can only be filled with all joy and peace, in believing. But believing, ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Follow these admonitions; and while the joy of the Lord is your strength, you shall not want the strength of the joy. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. You shall go on singing in the ways of the Lord; and you soon shall reach his presence, where there is fulness of joy; and his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Amen.

## LECTURE X.

### THE CHRISTIAN, IN DEATH.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."—Psalm xxxvii. 37.

You have heard of the manner in which a distinguished writer, and a Secretary of State, expired, "Come," said ADDISON, to a young nobleman of rather infidel principles, as he entered his dying chamber; "Come," said he, taking him softly by the hand; "Come, and SEE HOW A CHRISTIAN CAN DIE."

This has always been admired as a noble expression of composure, and faith, and zeal. And to this the poet alludes when he says—

"He taught us how to live; and O! too high  
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die."

If we object to any thing in the address, it is not that it came from a character whose religion some may think too undecided; for candor should lead us to conclude that he was what he professed to be—especially at a period so awful—but that the subject of the eulogy should have been the author. "Let another praise thee, and not thy own mouth; a stranger, and not thy own lips." The exclamation may indeed have been designed, not to glorify the man, but his religion; and to recommend from his own experience what could support and refresh, even when all other succors and comforts failed. Yet we would rather the friend or the minister had laid hold of the approaching observer, and leading

him into the room, had said, "Come, see how a Christian can die."

Such an office your Lecturer has to perform this morning. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*"

"Fly, ye profane, or else draw near with awe.

For here resistless demonstration dwells.

Here tired dissimulation drops her mask,

Here real and apparent are the same.

—You see the man; you see his hold on heaven.

Heaven waits not the last moment: owns its friends

On this side death, and points them out to men—

A lecture silent, but of sovereign use.

Life take thy chance—but O for such an end."

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the righteous: for the end of that man is peace." We premise three remarks.

The *First*, regards the *character*—The perfect man. This may seem discouraging; but it really is not so. If it intended absolute purity, no creature could claim the title. "Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly." If it intended actual exemption from all moral infirmities, none of the human race—no, not even of the sanctified part of it, could be included. "For there is not on earth a just man that liveth and sinneth not." "In many things," says an apostle, "we offend all." And our Saviour teaches us to pray for daily pardon as well as for daily bread.

To say that the Christian will certainly be complete hereafter, and that he is complete in Christ now, is true. But the character refers to something present and personal. Bishop Lowth, in his admirable prelections on the Hebrew poetry, remarks how commonly it abounds with parallelisms. The second member of the verse never expresses a new idea, but always repeats the sentiment contained in the first. It may enlarge or enforce or explain it; but never gives it up for another. According to this rule, the character is not only called perfect, but *upright*. And the latter attribute is explanatory of the former—the perfect man is the upright—one who is upright in his transactions with his own soul—upright in his dealings with his God—upright in his conduct with his fellow creatures—one "whose rejoicing is this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he has his conversation in the world."

The *Second*, regards the *subject of attention*.—The end of this man. Every thing pertaining to his character is deserving of notice: his birth; his relations; his conduct; his condition. But here our eyes are fixed on his death. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*"

The *Third* regards the *testimony* concerning his end—it is *peace*. This word was not used by the Jews as it is with us. With us it always suggests the idea of reconciliation and concord, after variance and strife; or of serenity of mind as opposed to some kind of conflict. With them the term was significant of good at large: prosperity; welfare; happiness. Thus we are commanded to pray for the "peace of Jerusalem." Thus Joseph says, "God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Thus Artaxerxes superscribes his letter, "Peace, and at such a time." Thus the disciples were to say as they entered, "Peace be to this house." Thus we are to understand it, as used by Simeon when he took up the Saviour in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." "My desires and hopes are accomplished; I am now happy; satisfied with favor, and filled with the blessing of the Lord."—And this is the meaning in the words before us—"Mark the

*perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*" This accords with our design this morning, which is to view the Christian,

#### IN DEATH.

There are four things in the dying of the Christian I would call upon you to observe—Its prospect. Its Experience. Its Influence. Its Issue.

I. THE PROSPECT IS NOT ALWAYS PLEASING.

II. THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE IS COMMONLY MUCH INDULGED AND DISTINGUISHED.

III. IT IS OFTEN PECULIARLY USEFUL BY ITS INFLUENCE.

IV. IT IS ALWAYS SAFE AND GLORIOUS IN THE ISSUE.

I. IT IS NOT ALWAYS PLEASING IN ITS PROSPECT.

There are some indeed who are able to look forward to the scene, not only without reluctance and dread, but with resignation and pleasure. They contemplate death as their deliverance; their victory; their triumph. In all their dissatisfactions and trials they seem to say, "Well; all will be soon explained, rectified, completed. When a few years are come, I shall go the way I shall not return." Thus Dr. Gouge was accustomed to say, "I have two friends in the world: Christ and death. Christ is my first, but death is my second." Such a Christian may be compared to a child at school. The little pupil is no enemy to his book; but he likes home; and finds his present condition not only a place of tuition, but of comparative confinement and exclusion. He does not run away; but while he studies, he thinks with delight of his return. He welcomes every messenger to him—but far more the messenger that comes for him. And though he may be a black servant, he says, "Well, he will take me to my father's house."

But such cheerfulness in the prospect is not invariably nor commonly the feeling of good men. When David says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," he speaks of this anticipation, as an attainment; and intimates that the fear which he was enabled to defy, was much connected with the event itself.

Here is a difficulty—not indeed with regard to the unconverted. To them we say, death may well be the king of terrors—and it is. The dread of it prevails more deeply and generally than they are willing to acknowledge. The apprehension of it often makes them superstitious and credulous; and they find a prognostic of their fate in a dream, in the howling of a dog, the croaking of a raven, the ticking of an insect, and a thousand other absurdities. How eager are they to guard against every thing that would accelerate the fatal hour. And how sedulously they strive to keep themselves from every thing that would prove a memento of it. One of the Kings of France gave orders that death should never be mentioned in his hearing. Catharine, the Empress of Russia, forbade funeral processions to pass the street near her palace, and required all burials to be performed in the night. Many avoid every reference to their deceased relations and friends, as if in tenderness to their memory; while it really arises from an unwillingness to think of an event to which they are themselves equally exposed. The constant effort of multitudes is to banish the thought from their minds, or to hinder its entrance. The Apostle therefore says, that they are all their lifetime *subject* to bondage, through fear of death. Not always actually in it, but *liable* to it—as reading, or hearing; a coffin, or an opening grave; an accident, or disease; may urge the subject upon their revolting attention. And it is easy to imagine the wretchedness of such a life: for how hard must it be to keep off from their thoughts

a thing that they very much hate and dread, and which daily and hourly occurrences must often obtrude upon them. yet, as soon as the sentiment is felt, all peace and comfort vanish.

—But the difficulty respects the Christian. Why should he be afraid in the prospect? Is not death conquered? and rendered harmless with regard to him? But the serpent may hiss, when it cannot bite. The poisonous fang may be extracted before our eyes, and yet we may feel, at taking the harmless adder into our bosom. There are many Christians whose anxieties and forebodings with regard to death, are only dispelled and destroyed by the event itself. Let us look at the case; and see if we cannot remove a stumbling-block out of the way of God's people. There are several things to be considered.

The fear of death is naturally unavoidable; and must therefore in itself be innocent. The very law of self-preservation necessarily makes every being averse to danger and injury. All the animal creatures have a dread of death. In them, this is merely an impulse, and operates without any distinct apprehension of evil; but in man, this instinctive repulsion has blended with it the result of reasoning, and of local attachment, and social love, and moral responsibility, and reflection, and forecast. Adam and Eve felt this fear in Paradise. To this principle the words were addressed, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." For this denunciation had been no threatening, had not death been viewed by them as the greatest evil. The apostles themselves, who had the first fruits of the Spirit, said, "In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." What wonder, therefore, if ordinary Christians feel the same?

And how much is there to excite apprehension? There is the novelty of the case. For, as Joshua said to the Jews, this is a way they have not gone heretofore. Here their own experience affords them no assistance: nor can they derive advantage from the experience of others. No one has returned to "blab the secret out," and tell them what it is to die. What, they think of the leaving for ever of objects to which they have been long accustomed—The separation from weeping friends—The pains, the groans, the dying strife—The destruction of the body—The consigning of it to the lonely grave—The conversion of it into food for worms—Their immediate access into the presence of purity and holiness—The judgment that follows after—Doubts of their acceptance with God—Uncertainties about their future state—Is there not enough here to try all their confidence and courage?

There is one thing more to be taken into the account. Others not only endeavor to avoid thinking of the seriousness of the subject, but in some measure they often succeed. By infidelity, and vain reasonings, and dissipations, they may preserve a kind of composure even to the last. Yea, they may amuse themselves even in death itself, as Hume was, joking about Charon and his boat—

"Whistling aloud to keep his courage up."

Yea, they may even bring their principles over to their deluded interest. For though unbelief and diversion do not abate their danger, they affect their apprehension of it, and make them insensible. A man walking upon a precipice is not secure because he is ignorant of his situation; but this ignorance keeps him easy, and laughing, and singing, till he falls off. And thus we are told of the wicked, that



they "have no hands in their death; and their strength is firm." But a Christian does not turn away from the subject. He must look at it. He must examine its nature, and bearings, and consequences: and in doing this, he feels much more in the prospect than numbers of those feel, who are ruined by the reality.

Be not therefore ashamed of your own feeling, especially to your fellow Christians and to your minister. Do not conclude that it is an evidence against the reality or degree of your religion. Do not imagine that it disproves, or renders suspicious your attachment to the Saviour. "Oh! if I loved him I should long to be with him; and then I should love his appearing; and then I should be able to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." But you do love him; and you wish to be with him, by wishing full conformity to his image, and the constant beholding of his glory. But you dread the passage. It is thus with the absentee, when thinking of his return. His estate, and wife, and children, are in America: And his heart is there also. Yet when he looks on the vast Atlantic, he shudders and shrinks back. But he does not from hence question his love to them, or his desire to be with them.

We acknowledge however that as believers you stand in a very different condition from others: and you ought to endeavor to rise above the fear of death. And there is enough, if you ever realize it, to produce in your minds a noble confidence. And it does not follow, that what you now feel, you will feel when the season of dissolution arrives.—For,

## II. THE DYING OF THE CHRISTIAN IS COMMONLY MUCH INDULGED AND DISTINGUISHED, IN THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE.

Thus it is said, "The righteous hath hope in his death." The degrees of this hope vary. In some we see this hope contending with fear, and not always able to repel it. In some, it produces a serenity in which the mind is stayed upon God, yet unattended with any higher feeling and pleasure: while some possess and display the full assurance of hope; and have an entrance ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of their Lord and Saviour. Amidst the wreck of nature, *these* are joyful in glory; and shout aloud upon their beds, as if they were already within the veil.

Now we are not going to claim this joy unspeakable and full of glory; or even this perfect peace; or even this supporting confidence, for all Christians in their dying moments. And yet we mean to say, that the highest degree is attainable; and that in general, they are much more favored, as to religious consolation, in death than in life. Here we will not speak of things beyond our reach. Were we to say—that the chinks and breaks made in the falling tenement of clay, may let in more light than could enter before—that the believer's nearer approach to the world of glory, may bring him more under its influence and impressions—that when he reaches the borders of the river, between him and Immanuel's land, he may glance the hills, and hear something of the harmony, and inhale the fragrance blown across—you would say, perhaps, and say justly, all this is figure. But there is truth in the dying privilege of the Christian. And four reasons may be mentioned for his superior indulgence at that solemn hour.

First, *He has now more of that single and entire dependence on the Saviour, which is so friendly to our relief and comfort.* A legal bias is natural to us; and during life, a degree of it prevails, of which the Christian is not himself sufficiently aware. He is searching after something, in which, if he does not glory, he insensibly trusts; and feels his hope varying often with his attainments, as if

the one was *founded* on the other. But all this is now over. Now he *must* have immediate consolation. But where is he to find it? When he looks back, he cannot derive it from a well-spent life: and when he looks inward, he cannot derive it from a sense of his present worthiness. He sees more clearly than ever that he is an unprofitable servant. In all his doings his sins do appear. And what can he do now? He *must* look to another; and apply to him as he is. He therefore cries,

"A guilty, weak, and worthless worm,  
On thy kind arm I fall;

Be thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my all."

And a satisfaction is experienced, which was only hindered *before* by unbelief.

Secondly, *He is then urged to come more conclusively to a judgment concerning his state.* He must, indeed, have often examined himself before; but he never felt so pressing an excitement as he now does. He can *comparatively* neglect it no longer. He now *must* know how matters stand between him and God, for they will soon be found unalterable. And if his condition was an unsound one, the exploring of it would be the way to alarm him, and not to tranquillize. But his state is good; and ignorance is the only cause of his suspicion and inquietude. Let this be removed, therefore, and let him see things as they truly are, and his trembling hope is confirmed. *His* fear before was needless, for the house was safe, and able to abide the storm. But now, having been driven to inspect the foundation, he knows its security and permanence; and can rejoice because he *sees* that it is founded on a rock.

Thirdly, *He then needs peculiar support and consolation; and the Lord deals with his people according to the principles of the truest friendship.* He is with them most, when they most require his presence. "I will be with him in trouble." He is always with him, for he hath said, "I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee." But the meaning is, that he will be with them then pre-eminently. And where is the believer who, in passing through life, has not had more of his manifestations and influences and comforts, in his sufferings, than in any other circumstances? But what an hour is here! when he gathers up his feet into the bed, and turns his face to the wall; and Satan for the last onset comes down, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short! But the Lord he has trusted and served will draw near at his breathing, at his cry. He will whisper into his very soul, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And what is the result? "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. My heart and my flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Lastly, *He can then safely receive those discoveries and communications which would have made undue impressions before.* For every thing there is a season; and the believer must be prepared for his work, as well as his reward; and for his duty in the way, as well as for his blessedness at the end. Our present conditions and stations are appointed us by the Lord; and while we are in them, their claims must not be despised or neglected. But if we are to regard our natural connections, and our civil and secular concerns, and the preservation of our health and life, we must be attached to them, and feel a degree of interest in them. Yet there are measures of knowledge and comfort, which would so powerfully affect us, as to draw us away from earth, and

make every thing seen and temporal *feel* too low and little to engage us. We see this in Peter. When our Saviour was transfigured, and Moses and Elias appeared with him in glory, Peter was so charmed, that he proposed building tabernacles, to reside there. But, says the Holy Ghost, he knew not what he said. For, to take but one view of the proposal, had it been complied with, what would have become of his house and wife and children? O! Peter, in his ecstasy, had forgotten these. These however must not be forgotten while we continue in our relations to them, and can fulfil their demands. But when we must leave the scene, it is wise and kind to allow us to be dead to it. When we are going, it is well to be loosened from our detentions. When life is ending, and the love of it can no longer be useful, it is a privilege to have our love to it vanquished by something better than life; and to be blinded to every thing we are resigning around us, by the sight of the glory that is to be revealed; and to be rendered deaf to every sound but the voice that cries, "Come up hither."

After all, we may not have perfectly accounted for the higher experience of the Christian in death. But the fact is undeniable. It has been verified in numberless instances. How often have we witnessed it ourselves. How often have we found Christians the reverse of all their previous apprehensions. We have attended them when they have displayed a dignity of sentiment, and expressed themselves with a force of language, to which they had been strangers before. The timorous have become heroic. They whose minds were contracted by ignorance, have burst into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The illiterate and the vulgar have shown an elevation and refinement of taste, philosophers never knew; and servants and rustics have sung,

"O glorious hour, O blest abode,  
I shall be near, and like my God;  
And flesh and sin no more control  
The sacred pleasure of my soul."

Fear not, therefore, O ye seed of Jacob. Encourage yourselves in the Lord your God; while you say, I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait; and in his word do I hope. Do not perplex yourselves about a futurity which God has foreseen and provided for. "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof"—and the good. Your duty has only to do with the present; and the grace you are to seek is grace to help in time of need; active grace for the hour of exertion; and passive grace for the hour of suffering: grace for life, in life; and dying grace, for a dying hour. The Jews were not to live on a hoard. If in their anxious distrustfulness they laid up manna for the ensuing day, instead of affording them a wholesome resource, it bred worms; they therefore gathered it fresh every morning, and it failed them not till they could eat of the old corn of the land. Take another allusion. If you were travelling, and before you could reach your destination you had a trying river to pass, would it not be enough to relieve you to know, that *when* you came to the brink there would be a boat ready to convey you over? Must it be brought to you now in your journey? Though necessary for the water, would it not rather encumber you on land? Yet so it is; you are not satisfied unless you can take the vehicle along with you. You must *see*: but you are *not* to see—"We walk by faith, and not by sight."

III. THE DYING OF THE CHRISTIAN IS OFTEN PECULIARLY USEFUL BY ITS INFLUENCE.

When our Saviour was foretelling the destiny of

Peter, he said, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." He was to die by violence and crucifixion. Ecclesiastical history informs us of numbers who were converted to the faith by the death of those who suffered for the gospel. The scene naturally tended to raise their curiosity, and fix their attention: and witnessing the firmness of their conviction, and the dignity of their support; and seeing their gentleness and patience; and hearing their prayers for their persecutors and murderers; they became companions of them that were so used. And thus led to the remark, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the churches.

All are not called to die for the truth's sake: but the effect ascribed to Peter's death will apply to the death of every Christian. Not only is it important to himself, but the glory of God is concerned in it.

"His God sustains him in his final hour.  
His final hour brings glory to his God."

The useful death, however, is not that only which abounds with ecstasy and rapture; but also that in which an inferior degree of confidence is blended with patience under suffering, submission to the will of God, humbleness of mind, penitence at the foot of the cross, a concern to recommend the Saviour's service and to promote his cause. This, if it does not excite so much wonder and discourse, is more exemplary. A death, too, strikes us where we see a victory over the world; when the individual is willing to depart, though not pressed by the infirmities and pains of age: but in the midst of life; and leaving not a scene of penury and wretchedness behind, but every present attraction and agreeable prospect. We also prize a death preceded by a holy and consistent life. Some religionists are fond of the marvellous and the sudden; and our obituaries are often filled with the triumphant departures of those who began to pray a few days before. This is often peculiarly the case with unreflectors. Few of these, if attended by certain orders of men, but in a few hours are quickly ripened for a confident and joyful death. We do not wish to limit the Holy One of Israel in the freeness of his mercy and grace. But wiser people hesitate about these prodigies. They wish for more certainty, more evidence than can be satisfactorily obtained in cases, where the impressions of the condition can scarcely be distinguished from the operation of the principle: and therefore, while they may sometimes indulge a hope, they will rarely be disposed to proclaim it—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*"

—Yes, it is peculiarly worthy attention. How often has the death of the saint proved the life of the sinner: and also helped those much who have believed through grace. A dying minister's end has exemplified, and confirmed, and enforced his doctrine; and he has effected in the sick chamber what he failed to accomplish in the church. A dying father, disregarded before, has been heard to purpose, when he has summoned his children to his bed, and solemnly addressed them, as Bolton did his family: "See that none of you meet me in an unconverted state at the day of judgment." Or as David admonished Solomon: "I go the way of the world. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord



searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." What ingenuousness has ever resisted a dying mother—heaven in her countenance—her tearful eye—the grasp of her soft hand—her last trembling embrace—her expiring accents—"What my son, and the son of my womb, and the son of my vows—are we here to part for ever?" The husband who refused to hear the word, though urged by beauty, and affection, and tears; when the desire of his eyes is removed—is now won, by the last instances of her lovely conversation made sacred by death: and while he rears the monument to her memory, resolves to trace her steps, once—how painful now the thought—taken alone!

—How affecting and interesting does grace render the dying of the Christian—not only to his relations and friends, but to all who see or hear it. Not only is the attention then excited, but every tinge is adapted to aid impression. Persons are now regarded with peculiar earnestness. They are supposed to be free from the influence of the world. They are regarded as sincere, and entitled to credit. All now is final—it is the last time they can be seen or heard. What a lecture is the event itself! It cries, See, every thing is vanity, the world is passing away. But here is a man that has hold of a better and an enduring substance, and displays a greatness that defies the ravages of death. The outward man perishes, but the inward man is renewed. He is bound, yet free. He is dying, and behold he lives—and not only has life, but has it more abundantly. The way of transgressors is hard, and they say nothing in praise of those things of which they are now ashamed. The people of the world never speak well of it at parting. But here is a man commending the ways of holiness, and bearing testimony to the excellences and goodness of the Master he has served to the last—"Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord. O taste, and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Oh! such a dying chamber is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. There "is brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." There angels hear the acclamation, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." Here, weaned from the world, and loosened from life, we have said, "Let us go away, that we may die with him." Here a glory has been shed, an influence has been felt, that has impressed the careless, fixed the wavering, emboldened the timid, convinced the ignorant. It has strengthened the saint to live. It has taught the pastor to preach. It has led the infidel to retire and pray, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Upon the principle of this part of our subject, we may make a remark concerning a slow or a sudden death. Unquestionably a sudden death is desirable, with regard to exemption and privilege. For what an indulgence must it be, to be spared all the forerunners and attendants of dissolution; and in the twinkling of an eye to pass from earth and to be with God. But it is less preferable on the score of usefulness. We derive nothing from the dying experience and language of such. A Christian is not to choose for himself; and if a lingering death will subserve more the honor of God and

the benefit of man, there is enough to induce him to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." Heaven will make amends for all—Yea, the usefulness itself is the sufferer's reward.

And, Christians, let me from hence admonish you to be concerned to serve religion, not only by the life you live, but by the death you die. The Saviour's empire and claims extend to both. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." "By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." Dr. Rivet said, "Let those who come to inquire, see me; I ought to be an example in death as well as in life." Samson, when about to die, prayed that God would strengthen him "this once." This is the last time you can do anything in the world. It is the last arrow you have in your quiver, says an old writer, and you should take a good aim with this. Cato is made in the tragedy to complain, that he could die but once for his country. You can die but once for your family, the church, and the world. O let it adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.

#### IV. THE DYING OF THE CHRISTIAN IS ALWAYS SAFE AND GLORIOUS IN THE ISSUE.

We must take this into the account in doing justice to his end. For there are instances in which the Christian may not be able to express, or enjoy pleasure or hope in death. There are two cases of this kind.

The first is, the case of divine rebuke for moral delinquency. For God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, has said, "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." This, however, is not wrath, but anger. Anger is consistent with love, and springs from it. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And he sometimes rebukes and chastens at the last. He hides his face, and they are troubled; and perhaps even their sun goes down under a cloud. But he retains not his anger for ever. Though they are chastened of the Lord, they are not condemned with the world; and though here he humbles them under his mighty hand, he exalts them in due time, for ever.

The other is the case of constitutional malady. In this condition our heavenly bard died; and we have known others who have died under a physical depression, with which religious encouragements have contended in vain. But though their end was not peace in the—exit, it was peace in the—issue. Their despondency did not affect their right to the tree of life. They condemned themselves; but God delighted in them.

And what an exchange; what a surprise did such sufferers experience! They departed, expecting to awake in torment, and found themselves in Abraham's bosom! They left the world in a momentary gloom, and entered into everlasting sunshine!

For observe, I beseech you, the difference between the delusion of the infidel, and the mistake of the Christian. "I give," says Hobbs, "I give my body to the dust, and my soul to the Great Perhaps." "I am going to take," says he, "a leap in the dark." And such a man not only takes a leap in the dark, but into the dark. And from the darkness of ignorance, and doubt, and uncertainty, he plunges into the blackness of darkness for ever.

But it is infinitely different with the Christian. He may take this last step in the dark, but he steps into day; perfect and endless day: where it will be said to him, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw herself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

Thus, however he may expire, the result is blessed; and the day of *his* death is better than the day of his birth. It is the day, when, as a weary traveller, he arrives at home: when, as a sea-tossed mariner, he enters his desired haven: when, as a long-enduring patient, he throws off the last feelings of his lingering complaint: when, as an heir of immortality, he comes of age, and obtains the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus, whatever may be the manner of his death, for *him* "to die is gain." And what gain? Can the tongue of men or of angels express what the Christian by dying gains—In exemption? In residence? In fellowship? In knowledge? In holiness? In pleasure? For when he closes his eye on the sorrows of life, he "shall not see evil any more." When he leaves this polluted earth, he has a better, even a heavenly country. When the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. When he leaves the wicked world, and the defective church, he joins the spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of angels. Now he sees through a glass darkly, then face to face. Now, when he would do good, evil is present with him. Now, the consolations of God are often small with him. Then he will be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. For when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. But it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

"In vain my feeble fancy paints

The moment after death;

The glory that surrounds the saints,

When yielding up their breath.

One gentle sigh their fetters breaks;

We scarce can say, They're gone!

Before the willing spirit takes

Her mansion near the throne.

Faith strives, but all its efforts fail,

To trace her in her flight;

No eye can pierce within the veil

Which hides that world of light.

Thus much (and this is all) we know—

They are completely blest;

Have done with sin, and care, and wo,

And with their SAVIOUR rest."

And is it for *such* we put on sable attire, and go mourning all the day? Is this thy kindness to thy friends? If you loved them, would you not rejoice because they are gone to the Father? Are they not now, from the most excellent glory, ready to exclaim, "Weep not for us, but for yourselves and children—you are the proper objects of pity, not we. You who are still in the conflict, not we who have gotten the victory. You who are yet in the body, not we who are delivered from the burden of the flesh. You who rise in the morning to cares that perplex you; fears that dismay you; disappointments that vex you; infirmities that depress you;—not we who are for ever with the Lord."

Ah! my brethren, if all this be true, what reason have we to adore the undeserved and infinite goodness of God. We cannot think too highly of this attribute; and it is well for our consciences that

the proofs of it are so numerous and obvious. The earth is full of his riches. In the various seasons, he crowns the year with his goodness. He daily loadeth us with his benefits. He gives us all things richly to enjoy. But what would all these have been, with destruction at the end? Who remembered us in our low estate? Who turned the curse into a blessing? Who converted the avenue to hell into the gate of life? Who caused the spoiler to enrich us? and made the last enemy an inestimable friend?

Let us not also forget the way in which this change is accomplished; the mediation of the Lord Jesus. Here is the mystery. We who were poor could never have been rich, if he who was rich had not for our sake become poor. Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself took part of the same. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree: and died that we may live. He abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He therefore says, "If a man keep *my* sayings, he shall not see death." He has indeed to pass through the state; but the bitterness of death is past. He has only to finish his course with joy: to fall asleep in Jesus; to depart to be with Christ, which is far better.

—But, my dear hearers, will this be the case with us? Let us not think the inquiry needless, or incapable of solution. Here people often show their ignorance and presumption. They talk of the desirableness of death; but expose themselves to the censure of the prophet, "Wo unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness?" When some of you wish you were dead, what is it in reality, but wishing you were damned? You are just as near to hell as you are to death; and the one is as sure as the other.—Be not therefore deceived. Whatever privations or sufferings you are now enduring, it is not better for you to die than to live. Much as you complain, these are only the beginning of sorrows, the earnest and foretastes of everlasting lamentation and mourning and wo. What says the voice from heaven? "Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." These are all blessed; but these only. As for those who are not in Him, they are not under grace, but under the law. And, "as many as are under the law are under the curse." His righteousness is not theirs to justify them. His Spirit is not theirs to sanctify them. They have no title to glory. No meekness for it. No capacity for its services. No susceptibility of its joys.

Finally. Let us now turn the medal. We have been speaking of the death of the Christian—but mark the wicked man, and behold the ungodly—What is his end? The answer would seem too awful for declamation; and we should not even present the scene, but to heighten the subject by contrast; and to prevent, if possible, your realizing it in your own experience. We therefore endeavor to save with fear; and knowing the terror of the Lord, would persuade men. And in this work of apparent severity, but real compassion, the sacred writers go before us. "What," says Peter, "shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" "The Lord," says David, "shall laugh at him, for he seeth that the day is coming. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. I was perplexed and pained at the sight of their prosperity, until I went into the sanctuary of God: then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them



slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."

Does 'he dying sinner look back upon the past? "Vanitv of vanities," says the reviewer, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity." His life appears a succession of fancies, dreams, and impositions. Nothing seems real—but his sins. These—his neglect of prayer, his forgetfulness of God, the profanation of his Sabbaths, the contempt of his word and commandments—these, in their number and aggravations, revive and reproach—and conscience keeps them in view.

—What satisfaction or relief can the present afford him? Every thing in his outward condition may be agreeable; but what is this to a wounded spirit? Righteousness delivers from death, but riches profit not in the day of wrath. What is honor to one who knows he is ready for the worms? Can flattery sooth the dull cold ear of death? What is the consolation of being praised where we are not—while we are miserable where we are!

What does the future promise? He is separating from every thing he loves, to enter a state in which he has no hope, after which he has no desire, and from which he has no escape—a state of thought without the possibility of diversion; of passion without the means of gratification; of society without friendship; of enmity without restraint; of accountability without excuse; of retribution without mercy; of loss without recovery; and of misery without end? Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. In many cases fear magnifies; and when the evil comes, the reality falls far short of the apprehension. But here the event infinitely exceeds the foreboding. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. No wonder therefore the death of the sinner is represented in the Scripture as the effect of compulsion—"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." "He shall be driven from light unto darkness, and chased out of this world." Some of these scenes are kept secret—perhaps they are misunderstood. They are ascribed to a distorted imagination. The terrified victim is supposed to be in the phrensy of delirium. Some, by the composing draught, are stupified, who would otherwise drive and keep every attendant from the room. Yet the reluctance and anguish and horror, are sometimes known; and make an awful impression for the time. But suppose there is nothing of this; and the sinner dies, as it is often expressed, like a lamb; the delusion is but for a moment.—He instantly sees his mistake. But the immutability of his state renders the knowledge as dreadful as it is unavoidable. His disappointment is an unspeakable aggravation of his misery; and the consequences are remediless.

O! that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end! Then surely you would not give sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids, till you had a good hope through grace, that you were delivered from such a doom.

—But you think the end is not near; and distant things do not impress. You put away the evil day. But can you put it *entirely* away? Yea, can you really put it *far* away? How long do you think of living? Fix the period. Place it at three-score years and ten—place it at four-score years—It is soon cut off, and you flee away—whither? What will become of you *then*?

But how uncertain is your reaching this period! At what age, in what place, in what condition, in

what employment, have not men died? On what are you relying to escape a death which has unexpectedly and prematurely carried so many of your connections and neighbors down to the dust? On youth? On strength?—What is your life? "It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." "Every man at his best state is altogether vanity." O! Thou, in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our heart unto wisdom.

And, my brethren, what is this wisdom? What is the one proper and rational part which creatures, circumstanced as we are, have to act? Is it not to prefer the soul to the body, and eternity to time?—Is it not to agree with our adversary while we are in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver us to the judge, and the judge deliver us to the officer, and we be cast into prison? Is it not to flee for refuge to the hope set before us? Is it not to make the concern of Paul supremely and immediately our own? "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

## LECTURE XI.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN THE GRAVE.

"*If I wait, the grave is mine house.*"—JOB xvii. 13.

THIS was in answer to the opinion and advice of his friends. They had repeatedly intimated, that if he repented, and reformed, and prayed to God, he might surely reckon upon a speedy restoration to health, and a peaceful abode, and a prosperous condition. "If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplications to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear: because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away: and thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.—And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee."

Now, says Job, if I were to do this, and wait for the accomplishment of your promises, I should be disappointed. Not that it would be in vain for me to serve God; but he would not appear for me in the way of which you speak. He will not deliver me from my present afflictions in this world; or recover me from the disorder under which I am ready to expire—No. The case is mortal and desperate—"If I wait, the grave is mine house."

This leads us to make two remarks. The first connects itself with a passage which he presently uttered, and which has given rise to much dispute. I refer to his noble confession. There are some who contend, that he means only to express his hope of a temporal redemption, or the revival of his former greatness. But, in answer to this poor and low interpretation, not to observe the solemnity of the introduction, and the grandeur of the sentiment and

diction, it is plain, not from a few, but many declarations, that Job entertained no expectation of being restored in this life. "The eye that seeth me shall see me no more. For now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, and I shall not be. My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?" "*If I wait, the grave is mine house.*" He must therefore have reference to the most glorious of all events when he says, "O that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

The second remark is, that when Job said, "*If I wait, the grave is mine house.*" he was mistaken. Instead of a speedy dissolution, which he obviously looked for, "the Lord turned his captivity, and gave him twice as much as he had before. And after this, Job lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons and his sons's sons, even four generations." How often, in the risings of His grace and of his providence, does he not only deliver, but surprise his people. The day seemed setting in with clouds and darkness; but at evening time it was light. "We would not, brethren," says Paul, "have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." David, also, was soon able to refute his own unbelieving conclusion: "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto thee." And is there a Christian here, but can acknowledge, to his praise, that he has been better to him than his fears; and done for him exceeding abundantly, above all he was once able to ask or think?

—Yet Job's recovery, with regard to life, was not a cure. He was only *reprieved*. The sentence was left suspended over him still—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And thus, the words were true in his case—"If I wait, the grave is mine house;" and his house it was. And thus, my dear hearers, the words furnish a motto for each of you. Whatever be the object of your hope, here is your destination. You may wish, and you may wait; but here is the end of all your solicitudes. Whatever is your present abode, here is your last. You may now occupy a strait and mean tenement, or a large and splendid mansion: but you will neither be incommoded with the one, or delighted with the other, long—Here is the residence to which you are all hastening—hastening even while I speak—*The grave is mine house.* Let two things engage our attention.—Let us

I. CONSIDER WHAT IS AWFUL AND REPULSIVE IN THE GRAVE.—And

II. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN CAN FIND TO RELIEVE IT.

I. CONSIDER WHAT IS AWFUL AND REPULSIVE IN THE GRAVE.

..... "The grave, dread thing;  
Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd. Nature appalled  
Shakes off her wonted firmness. Ah! how dark

Thy long extended realms, and rueful wastes,  
Where naught but silence reigns, and night, dark night."

—This is fine, but Job excels it. "Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." What a solemn grandeur pervades this representation! What an evidence does it furnish of Burke's observation, that obscurity is a source of the true sublime; and that, even in poetry, a powerful impression may be made, where no distinct imagery is represented.—Let us take three views of the grave; they are all awful and affecting.

*First*, We may regard it as a *monument of human guilt*. What error can be named, that is not connected with diminishing apprehensions of sin? Hence we must seize every opportunity of producing the needful conviction, that it is an evil and bitter thing; evil with regard to God, and bitter with regard to ourselves. Men think lightly of it, but it is more poisonous than the gall of asps. They cannot be induced to hate it, and fear it: and yet they may constantly and easily see its hateful and fearful effects. If they will not believe in the hell that it has prepared for the devil and his angels in another world, they cannot deny the desolations it has produced among the children of men in this. Once all that moved upon the earth was buried in the deluge—Could you have witnessed the spectacle without horror? But the same sin which then destroyed all the human race at once, acts no less fatally now in killing them all successively and individually. The time is nothing; the execution is the same. Earthquakes, and wars, and pestilence, and famine, are of more rare occurrence, and few comparatively can view the effects: but you can all trace the ravages of disease; you can all see men going to their long home, and the mourners going about the streets. Repair to some Golgotha. Enter a church-yard. Throw your eye over the inscribed stones, and the turfed hillocks; think of the undistinguished mass on which you tread—and then ask the question, which Jehu asked when he saw the remains of the sons of Ahab—"Who slew all these?" Why every burying ground, according to its size, is a jail with so many cells, some holding one, and some more prisoners; and they who are lodged there are not confined in consequence of a debt due to nature, but to the justice of God. There is no grave in heaven; there was no grave in paradise; and there would have been none in all the earth, but for sin. Man was indeed originally capable of dying, as his experience soon evinced; yet no accident without, and no malady within, would have endangered his being, or diminished his vigor, but for sin. While innocent, he was immortal—not from the inherency of any immutable properties of nature, but from the divine appointment and preservation, of which the tree of life in the midst of the garden was either the means or the pledge. "The wages of sin is death." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death came on all, because all have sinned."

*Secondly*, We may view it as a *state of extreme degradation*. Of whatever we are invested with, we must be despoiled at the gate of the grave. Even the costly and tempting attire that ministered so much to the vanity of the wearer, and the danger of the beholder, is here stripped off; and if any substitute be allowed, it is the shroud and the winding-sheet—though thousands are denied even these. "We brought nothing with us into the world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out." "As he



came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand." "For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him."

What is any condition without society? But the grave forbids all intercourse, all interview. Says Ezekiel, with tears, "I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world."

Here the man boasts of his relations. There he says to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.

There all his active functions, and the feelings which they engendered or subserved, have ceased. "The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing. Also their love and hatred, and envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." His business, his profession, descends to his successor, or passes to his rival. Even his religious exercises are there abandoned. "In death there is no remembrance of thee. In the grave who shall give thee thanks? Shall the dust praise thee, shall it declare thy truth? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave?" "Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

The body itself, that fine piece of divine workmanship, so fearfully and wonderfully made, is here broken and thrown by as a vessel wherein is no pleasure. The hands have forgotten their enterprise. The cherubic tints have left the cheek, cold and palid. The bright eye is quenched in darkness; and the tongue that excited so much emotion is muteness itself. Nor is this all. There is enough in the body, even while living, to prevent all glorying in the flesh. It had its humbling appetites and infirmities: it was the seat of diseases which sometimes required all the force of duty and friendship to discharge the offices of humanity. See Job covered with sore biles from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, sitting among the ashes, and scraping himself with a potsherd. But let the anatomist take off from a human body that translucent veil, the skin; and then observe the hideous and shocking spectacle of flesh, and sinews, and muscles. View the skeleton, when every thing is removed from the dry bones. But see the body in the various stages of decomposition and putrefaction—What an exhibition of expense and finery is that funeral! Why all this pomp and artifice? It is in honor of the deceased. Why then do you not show to the multitude of gazers, "the Principal concealed, for whom you make the mighty stir?" You dare not. You have been obliged to enclose, and solder, and coffin him up. What tears bedew the grave at parting! Why then do you part? Why not take and preserve at home "the deceased angel?" You dare not—The form is intolerable. You must bury your dead out of your sight, and shut too the door, and inscribe over it—

"How loved, how valued once, avails thee not,  
To whom related, or by whom begot:  
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;  
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be."

Thirdly, We may notice it as an *universal receptacle*. "I know that thou wilt bring me to death: and to the house appointed for all living."

Then, how large its *extent*! Though the memorials of death do not every where meet your sight: and particular spaces are properly appropriated for interment; and some of them are very capacious and crowded: yet there is scarcely a spot, that holds not some portion of humanity. You feel as you march over a field of battle: you feel as you walk through a church-yard, especially in the darkness

of the night. But are the dead only there? Perhaps some one has been turned to dust beneath the pew in which you are now sitting. Perhaps your house stands, and your garden blossoms, over the remains of some who were once as active as you. What walk can you take, and not trample on the ashes of those who are gone before?

"What is the world itself? Thy world?—A grave.  
Where is the dust that has not been alive?  
The spade, the plough disturbs our ancestors;  
From human mould we reap our daily bread.  
O'er devastations we blind revels keep.  
Whole buried towns support the dancer's heel.  
As nature, wide our ruin spread; and death  
Inhabits all things but the *thought of man*!"

Then, how *numerous its victims*! How soon the power of calculation fails in reckoning up the myriads that do occupy, and will occupy this dark abode. Seven hundred and fifty millions constitute the population of the globe. These, in less than a century, will be all lodged in the grave. Yet what are these to the multitudes which will follow, and to the immensities that precede!—"Every man shall draw after him, as there have been innumerable before him!"

Then, how *impartial its demands*! Infinitely diversified as the ways of human life are, here they all approximate and unite. The paths of glory lead but to the grave. Here come the nobles with their titles, and princes with their crowns, and scholars with their volumes.

"Why all this toil, the triumph of an hour?  
What, though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame,  
Earth's highest station ends in—Here he lies!  
And dust to dust concludes her noblest song!"

"One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." There lies the babe that perished in the porch of life; and there the thrice greyheaded Parr. The beautiful and the deformed, the rich and the poor, there meet together. "There the prisoners rest together: the small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master." "Do not all go to one place? All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again!"

Then, how *painful its separations*! If it be appointed for all living, then must it entomb the friend that is as thine own soul; the child of thy love, the wife of thy bosom, the guide of thy youth. There Mary goes to the grave to weep over Lazarus. There David cries, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan." Who has not sustained some bereavement? Who has not some spot the dearest on earth, and rendered sacred by a deposit more precious than gold? Thus every man feels an interest in the grave. It is to him the residence not of strangers and foreigners, but of kindred who detach him hence. What do I here, and what have I here? I am related not to the living, but the dead—There lie all that bound me to earth. "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and my acquaintance into darkness."

Then, how *personal its claims*! If it be appointed for all living, it must require me. I may escape a thousand other things that befall my fellow creatures; but I must follow them here. I see, in *their* end, the emblem, the pledge, the certainty of my own. No privilege can exempt me here. I am going the way of all the earth. "If I wait, the grave is mine house."

But surely there is one exception to be found. We read of a peculiar people, and who are not to

be numbered among the nations. They are the children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. The Christian, is not he free? No. There is no entering heaven but under ground.

Yet, even in those things in which the Christian seems confounded with others, he is really, he is divinely distinguished. The Christian can view the grave with an eye of faith, as well as of sense. He can view it not only in connection with that sin which has reigned unto death, but in connection with that grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Though he cannot escape it, he need not dread it. He is prepared to meet it: to encounter it; to vanquish it; to triumph over it; to insult it; to say, "O grave, where is thy victory?"—Let us pass to the

## II. Part of our subject, and consider WHAT THE CHRISTIAN CAN FIND TO RELIEVE THE SCENE.

People seem to have found a kind of satisfaction when entering the grave, from the thought that they are going to join their connections. Hence, as well as from the pride of distinction, sprang the mausoleums of the great, a kind of family-tomb. Hence, among the Jews, the frequency of sepulchres in their gardens; where they seemed still to retain the departed near them; and maintain a kind of communion with them; and feel soothed at the thought of blending with them, in the exclusive and endearing abode. Hence Ruth said to Naomi, "Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Jacob said, "I will go down into the grave to my son." "I will lie with my fathers; and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place." "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." "In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place; there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah." Nor was this only the language of faith, but of nature. In vain I am told there is no reason in the thing, since there is no conscious community in the grave. There are beautiful insects, too fine for dissection: yet there is in them all the reality of organization. There are sentiments to be felt rather than explained—instincts of the heart; it is nature—it is the God of nature that speaks in them. We often feel most forcibly an impression whose cause is hidden and undefinable. What occurs to the mind in a kind of distinct proposition may be met, and argued, and repulsed; but a principle whose influence is really, yet secretly and unaccountably exerted, resembles those invisible laws in the natural world, whose agency we can neither deny nor withstand. To which we may add, that whatever tends to diminish the gloom of the grave, and to render it more inviting, is to be cherished, and not despised. But we have something superior to all this. There are five things which a Christian should think of with regard to the grave. Jesus himself has been in it. It is a place of repose. It receives only a part of the man. It will not be able to retain this always. It must not only restore it, but restore it improved.

First, When you think of the grave, remember that *Jesus himself has been there*. How far did he, who is all your salvation and all your desire, carry his humiliation! He descended into the lowest parts of the earth. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so the Son of man was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He not only died, but was buried, according

to the Scripture. And hereby he not only said, See how certain my death is; but, Are you afraid to enter the grave? I will go in before you, and render it safe and attractive—Yes, the Lily of the Valley, and the Rose of Sharon, was laid there, and has left a long perfume. Whenever I am committing the remains of a believer to the tomb, I seem to hear the angels saying, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

"The graves of all his saints he blest,  
And softened every bed;  
Where should the dying members rest,  
But with the dying Head?"

Secondly, When you think of the grave, remember, *It is a place of repose*. Hence Job adds, "I have made my bed in the darkness." But who sleeps the less sound for the darkness? The darkness aids our slumber. And who, after the fatigues of the day, dislikes or dreads the refreshment of night? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet. He lies down and forgets his sorrow, and remembers his misery no more.

God has a hiding-place for his people even in life; and often says, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thee also for a little season, until the indignation be overpast." But here the clouds return after the rain; and as long as earth is their abode, bonds and afflictions abide them. Therefore, says Job, "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave; that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be past; that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" God takes away his people from the evil to come. He foresees it; but they do not. He therefore lays hold of them, and places them in a sheltered retreat. And you often clearly see, after their removal, what some of your connections would have suffered had they continued here a little longer. Ah! says one, whose purposes are broken off—his very heart desolated within him—Ah! what should I have escaped, had I been allowed an earlier retirement. "For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept: then had I been at rest." Yes—from the snares and vexations of the world; from the reproaches and persecutions of the ungodly; from the perfidy or weakness of friends; from the temptations of the Devil; from the conflicts of flesh and spirit: there all will be peace; all will be quietness; all will be assurance for ever. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest."

Thirdly, When you think of the grave, remember that *it has only a partial empire*: it only receives what is corporeal and mortal. Here we are not going to enter into metaphysical reasonings. We understand but little of the connection of spirit, with matter; yet why should we doubt the possibility of its existence separate from it? Are we not conscious of some mental operations, in which the body seems to take no share? And when the powers of the body are suspended in sleep, is there not something that sees without eyes, and hears without ears? Do we not even then dream? and often with an amazing degree of activeness?

The heathens seemed to allow that something in man could exist, and would either suffer or enjoy independently of the body—for of the revival of the body they never had the least notion. But we turn at once to the Scriptures, the only source of satisfactory information in a case like this. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Hear the statement of the Apostle: "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord." And his own wish expressed to the Philippians: "I long to depart to be with



Christ, which is far better;" *i. e.* far better for *him*, though to abide in the flesh was more needful for *them*. Now if he did not believe that his soul would be immediately with Christ, his desire is perfectly unintelligible. For by dying, he would have been no sooner with Christ, than he would by remaining alive, as to time; nor so near, as to enjoyment; for here he had access to him and intercourse with him. How undeniably is this distinction admitted by our Saviour, and made the rule of his most solemn admonitions. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." "I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." To which we may add his promise to the thief on the cross; which, though often tortured, still refuses to support any other principle; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

This being premised and proved, we observe, that the souls of believers are in their bodies, as the lamps of Gideon in the pitchers: at midnight the pitchers are broken, and the lamps shine forth, and the victory is obtained. This, to drop the metaphor, this is the ground of consolation taken by the Apostle: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

*Fourthly*, When you think of the grave, remember that its reign is not only limited as to subject, but as to duration. Even the body, which it does receive, will not, cannot be retained by it always; therefore the Apostle adds, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The grave is called our long home, not because it is far off, for we live in the very neighborhood; but because our stay there will be long, compared with our stay in our present home. This, indeed, will not apply to all. Some at the last day will have been buried only a year, or a week, or a day. The sexton will be performing his office on some at the very instant; and the re-animated corpse will burst the coffin before it be confined in the grave; and the attendants be all changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. But *you* will lie there till the heavens be no more. *Many* will have been found dwelling there for thousands of years. Yet whatever be the length of the occupancy, it will have an end, and all the inhabitants will be sent forth.

And why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead? With God all things are possible. But you say, appearances do not render it probable. We see nothing more of the body we inter; yea, we know it dissolves and returns to dust. Yet was not that oak once an acorn? Did not that beautiful insect once lie in its little mummy grave? But it burst its confinement, and now owns the air and sky. What do men produce from the rudest elements? Show a stranger to the process, a figure of glass; and then place him before the bare materials from which it is deduced. "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." But how decisive is the testimony of the Scripture! The doctrine is found even in the Old Testament. Our

Saviour found it in the Pentateuch; and deduced it from the declaration of God at the burning bush: "I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:" for all live unto him—purpose and accomplishment being the same with him. In Isaiah we read, "Thy dead men shall live: together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Many have supposed, with much probability, that here is a promise of the resurrection of believers through their union with Christ. But if the evidence of this supposition be not strong enough to bear such an argument, it is undeniable, that the deliverance of the people of God from a state of the lowest degradation and hopelessness, is here held forth by an image taken from the resurrection of the dead.—And Ezekiel employs the same image in the vision of the dry bones, raised to union and life. And what can more clearly prove that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was in those days a known and popular sentiment? For an image employed to represent any thing in the way of allegory or metaphor, whether in poetry or prophecy, must be generally and well understood, or the end of its appropriation is defeated. In the New Testament, it is more than merely admitted. It is every where affirmed, and reasoned from, as an important principle. And how commonly the notion and belief of it prevailed among the Jews, appears from the language of Martha; "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." And from the defence of Paul before Felix; "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

Here also we have it in fact and example. Several were raised again: and one of them after he had lain in the grave four days, and the process of corruption must have more than commenced. But Jesus himself arose: and he is not only an instance, but a pledge. If ever an event was proved, it was at the resurrection of Christ. But if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some that there is no resurrection of the dead? But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep. His resurrection is the claim, as well as the proof of ours—"Because I live, ye shall live also." Our nature was revived in his person; and thus we are quickened with Christ, and raised up, and made to sit with him in heavenly places.

But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; *afterwards* they that are Christ's, at *his coming*. Our Saviour repeatedly said, "I will raise him up at the last day." For this is the period appointed for the resurrection: and the reason of the appointment, in a measure, appears. If each body was raised in succession previously, the order of nature and Providence would be perpetually invaded, and miracles would be constantly required. And not only for this reason, but also for the greater honor of the Redeemer, this greatest and sublimest exertion of Almighty power is reserved for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. *Then*, O Death! he will be thy plagues; *then*, O Grave! he will be thy destruction; and repentance shall be hid from his eyes.

*Finally*, Remember, to complete your comfort, that *what you resign to the grave will not only be restored, but infinitely improved*. As Egypt was compelled not only to allow the Israelites to depart, but to send them away enriched; and as Cyrus not only gave up the captives from Babylon, but ordered

them to be helped with silver and gold, and with goods, and beasts, beside their own free-will offerings to the house of God; so will it be in the resurrection. Believers will not only leave the grave as they entered it—they will be, not only delivered, but exalted; they will not only have life, but have it more abundantly.

I deem this an important part of our subject: you will therefore allow me a little enlargement. Whoever has looked over the early attacks on Christianity will have observed, that the pagan philosophers not only denied the doctrine of the resurrection, but affected to condemn the thing itself. They considered it a bane, rather than a benefit; and represented it as imprisoning us again, and burdening us again, after the soul had been freed from its fetters and load. And some Christians really seem to be almost like-minded. Few appear to consider it a prize; at least, such a prize as Paul did when he said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And the reason is probably this. They now know the disadvantages of the body, and are insensibly led to judge of the future by their feelings at present. And indeed if the bodies raised up were no better than those laid down, the resurrection would excite but little eagerness of desire. But what saith the Scriptures? Do not the sacred writers supremely lead forward your minds to this, and point your highest hope, not to the intermediate state, but to your re-embodied?—"He shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Man, in his primeval state, was incarnate: and if hereafter we could attain perfection and happiness without our bodies, what need would there be for their reproduction from the dust? Yet, according to the views and feelings of many, this grandest exertion of divine power seems to be entirely, or almost, unnecessary.

But let us not be wiser than our Maker. However incapable we may be of reasoning convincingly upon the subject, there must be an accession of perfection and happiness to be enjoyed in a state of reunion with the body, unattainable in a separate state. The life of a mere spirit must differ much from its subsistence in a corporeal organization. Without the latter, it can hardly connect itself, for want of a medium, with the material universe, the new heavens and the new earth. It must be a stranger to the pleasures that depend on our senses and passions; and also those which arise from imagination. Was it not a privilege for Enoch and Elias to enter heaven embodied? "But their bodies were changed." It is allowed. And ours will be changed also; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And what a change must that be, that *can* fit us for such a state! We are therefore not to think of our future incarnation by our present. The body then will not be a prison, a burden; it will not be a hinderance, but a help; and will even subserve the soul in knowledge, holiness, benevolence, and enjoyment.

There are two ways by which the Scripture elevates our conceptions of the resurrection body. The first is, to compare, or rather contrast it with the body we now have. "So is the resurrection of the dead. - It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." Not only incapable of defilement, but of dissolution, of declension, of injury; impassive; immortal. "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory." No longer composed of base elements, subsisting on gross supplies, subject to the same laws with the beasts that perish, employed in low and degrading toils and pursuits. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." No longer fatigued with a little exertion, and requiring long

insensibilities of sleep, and frequent returns of food, to renew its strength and keep it fit for action; but capable of serving Him in his temple day and night, without languor, and without repose. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." Not a spirit, but spiritual. Not spiritual in its essence, but in the refinement of its senses, and indulgences, and functions, and use. For "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

The second is, to hold forth the conformity it will bear to the body of our Saviour. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And this likeness takes in the body as well as the soul. What a body was that, which after his resurrection could render itself visible and invisible at pleasure; which walls and doors could not exclude; which moved with the ease and expedition of thought; which ascended up on high without impulsion which appeared to Saul, and at noon-day shone above the brightness of the sun; in which he is now worshipped by all the angels of God; and in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and reign for ever and ever! But this, O believer, is the model of thy destination. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

—Let this assurance and confidence lead us to bless God for revelation, and the explicitness of its discoveries. With us the darkness is past, and the true light shineth. And what does it leave undiscovered that is important to our safety, or our welfare, or our comfort? Whatever reasonings and conjectures the Heathen had with regard to a future state, it is well known they gave up the body. No one for a moment ever supposed that the grave could re-open, and the *dead* arise. When Paul was at Athens (where the immortality of the soul was frequently asserted), and preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection; even the men of science, forgetting the gravity that became their character, "mocked!" and said, "What will this babbler say?" But there is not a peasant or a child in our land of vision, but knows that the *dead*, small and great, will stand before God.

—This prospect should comfort you in the loss of your connections. You are not forbidden to feel—"Your grief becomes you, and your tears are just." Jesus wept. But "Weeping must not hinder sowing." "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." "But they were so dear!" They were. But they are much dearer now. They have left all their imperfections, and all their sorrows behind—

"They sleep in Jesus, and are blest:  
How sweet their slumbers are;  
From suffering and from sin released,  
And freed from every care."

And this is not all. "Martha! Thy brother shall



rise again. Rachel! You weep for your child, and refuse to be comforted, because he is not." "Why was this loved babe born? why was I torn with pain at his birth, and again rent with anguish at his death? What purpose has his brief history answered? What has now become of him?" These and a thousand other inquiries which the busy mind will ask, could never have been answered, but for this book—never so precious as in the hour of trouble. There the mystery is explained. There, you learn, that a sparrow falleth not to the ground without your heavenly Father; that the present is only the threshold of existence; that the soul of this infant is now in the Shepherd's bosom, and that his body will not perish, but be seen again, "all heavenly and divine." "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and thy children shall come again from the land of the enemy." O ye children! who are yet spared, and are now responsible for your conduct; let this comfort be put into our hearts with regard to you. Remember your Creator. Live and die in the Lord; and then, though we lose you for a moment, you shall be restored to us, equal to the angels, and be the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. And you, parents! endeared by so much affection, and whose venerable looks remind us of separation; fear not to go in good time. We will rock the cradle of your age; and comfort you on the bed of languishing; and kiss your cold cheeks, and close your eyes, and lay you in the dust—But we shall see you again; and our heart shall rejoice, and our joy no one taketh from us.

—And let this animate you when looking towards your own grave. And surely some of you *must* be thinking of it. Your complaints, your infirmities, your years, *must* lead you to ask, How long have I to live? Well! if you are a Christian, you have every reason to think of it with resignation and pleasure. God says to you, as he did to Jacob trembling on the confines of Egypt, "Be not afraid to go down: I will go down with thee; and I will bring thee up again." If you still watch over your sleeping dust, and he will bid it rise. If it be trying to part with your companion the body, remember it is only for a time; and it will be restored to you in the image of God's Son. Say then, "I am not following cunningly devised fables. I build upon a rock. It is true, sin takes away my health and breath, and lays my body down in the grave. But I hear *Him* saying among the tombs, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. At the sound of this, I take courage and go forward. I am not stumbling over a precipice, uncertain where I shall fall, and not knowing that I shall ever rise. I descend into the grave by a gentle flight of steps, leaning on my Beloved and my Friend—I choose to die. It is thou, my God, my Saviour, who callest me; and I give up my life into thy hand, assuredly persuaded, that thou art able and willing and engaged to return it." This is not empty declamation. I have taken the very language from the lips of a dying saint—I stood by—and after she had surveyed her reduced and wrinkled hands and arms, she ended her address—and life too, a few moments after—with the words of the sweet Psalmist in our British Israel:

"Oft have I heard thy threatenings roar,  
And oft endur'd the grief:  
And when thy hand hath press'd me sore,  
Thy grace was my relief.

By long experience I have known  
Thy sov'reign pow'r to save;  
At thy command I venture down  
Securely to the grave.

When I lie buried deep in dust,  
My flesh shall be thy care;  
Those with'ring limbs with thee I trust,  
To raise them strong and fair."

—But what is all this to some of you, my brethren? Let me speak freely; and do not consider me as your enemy because I tell you the truth. Who of you have not frequently been at the grave of a neighbor, a friend, a relation? Sometimes you have been deeply impressed there. But how soon did the impression wear off; and you renewed your pursuit of the world, as eagerly as if you had never heard, never seen, never felt that all was vanity and vexation of spirit.

What do you think of your own grave? Perhaps the thought never enters your mind; or if it does, you deem it an impertinent and hateful intruder; and you drive it from you, as you would a serpent. Some of you have been led down very nearly to the grave, by perilous accident or disease. And how did it appear? Did it not seem an awful thing to enter an invisible and changeless state? Did you not turn your face to the wall and weep? If ever you prayed, was it not then? "O spare me a little, that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more." Where now are the confessions and vows of that hour? Perhaps the very scene is rendered disagreeable by your apostasy from your convictions—your endeavor to forget it—and you shun the Christian, and the minister you called in, because they are now witnesses against you.

Here is an awful case. And what can you do? If you wait, the grave is your house—and you know you must enter it. You may play the infidel; you may deny the truth of the gospel; but it is useless to deny that you are on the borders of the grave—you may reason about it; you may look up and curse God and your King. But you cannot escape. Perhaps you would be shocked to be unburied; but this is not likely to be your case. You may have a good grave—a much better grave than many of your neighbors; and it will afford your body ease; and in this sense, the clods of the valley will be sweet about you. But is there not a spirit in man? Where will your soul be while your body is resting in the grave? Yea, and how is the body to be disposed of at last?

The Lord Jesus will raise *you*, as well as his people; but his agency will have a very different principle. The resurrection of the godly will be performed by him—as their Lord and Redeemer, under the administration of grace; but the wicked will be raised by him as the Ruler and the Judge, under an administration of law; for they are under the law, and not under grace. They refused the ransom, and died in their guilt; and the grave received *them* as criminals in charge, bound over to justice—for as many as are under the law, are under the curse; and as they live, and die—so they rise the same.

There is also a difference in the bodies revived. What the bodies of the righteous will be, you have heard; but they that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption*. The evils attached to *your* bodies will not be left in the grave, but will cleave to them for ever; and they will inherit the seeds of disease, and the principles of deformity; and they will have the same raging appetites and passions—but all unindulged.

The conditions following also differ. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.

they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Thus both the chief butler and chief baker were released at the same time, and from the same confinement—the one to be advanced, and the other to be executed. The grave, to the believer, is an avenue to heaven. It is the dress-chamber, in which the church puts on her beautiful garments, to arise and meet the Lord in the air. But to others, it is the condemned cell in which the malefactor is lodged till he is led out to punishment. That can hardly be called a deliverance, that releases a man from a bad condition and consigns him to a worse. It would be well if the bodies of the wicked could remain where by death they are deposited: but this is impossible. The bodies—those bodies which you have so indulged, so pampered, so adorned: the bodies which death delivers to the worms, the resurrection will deliver to the flames!

And where are you now? Take the hemp or the steel, and destroy yourself. Ah! this too is impossible. The soul is instantly before God. You have got rid only of one part of you. And even the part you have demolished, will be re-animated and rendered invulnerable—and you shall seek death, but shall not find it; and shall desire to die, but death shall flee from you.

—But why do I thus address you? It is that, by awakening your consciences from a fatal security, I may in time dispose you to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" I am sure of this, that I would not have enlarged upon your awful condition, had I not believed that there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; and that none of you are excluded from it, unless those who exclude themselves. But so it is. The Saviour stands before you in all the combined forms of power and of pity. He is able—he is willing to save unto the uttermost. Seek him while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Wait for no qualifications to recommend you to his gracious notice. He requires none. If Paul and Silas were here, they would say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Plead not, as an objection, your unworthiness. This should only increase the earnestness of your application. Behold the number and the character of those who have obtained mercy. Read his word: and hear him not only allowing, but inviting and commanding you to approach, with the assurance, "him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Obey his voice. Commit yourselves into his hands. And you shall never come into condemnation, but shall pass from death unto life. And though even then, if you wait, the grave is your house, it will only be a peaceful and temporary residence to sleep in; and you will finally enter another house—a building of God, a house not made with hands—eternal in the heavens.

## LECTURE XII.

THE CHRISTIAN, IN HEAVEN.

"Who hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."—2 Tim. i. 10.

DID the heathen then know nothing of life and immortality before? They had their schools and their philosophers. Some of them acquired great distinction and fame. Their sagacity and learning were deep and extensive. They were enriched by a long succession of preceding discoveries and improvements. In the various arts and sciences they much excelled; and he that would see a fine piece of statuary must fetch it from the ruins of Greece and Rome. But, as to the things of God,

we are assured by one who was well qualified to judge, "They were vain in their imaginations: their foolish heart was darkened. And professing themselves wise, they became fools."

They had, indeed, their surmisings concerning a future state; they brought forward some strong probabilities in its favor; and aided in their reasonings by hints of unacknowledged tradition, some fine and worthy sentiments escaped from them. But they never taught life and immortality as a doctrine; they never employed it as a principle and motive. They had no authority to publish it to others: and not one of them was sure of the thing in his own mind. And, as Paley well remarks, "Conjecture and opinion are not knowledge: and in religion, nothing more is known than is proved." Thus the world by *wisdom* knew not God; and if this was the case with the wise and the learned, what was it with the common people, with the old, with children, with the busy and engrossed, who could only eat their bread by the sweat of their brow? The apostle, therefore, speaking of the Gentiles, says, they were left, "If haply they might feel after Him, and find Him"—an expression borrowed from the blind, who grope for their object, and their way, uncertain of success, and in danger of hurting themselves by their own efforts.

But did not the *Jews* know? We make no scruple to say, they did. To them pertained the oracles of God. He gave his word unto Jacob; his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; and dealt not so with any other people. David said, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Jacob, even in death, was "waiting for the salvation of God." How explicit was the profession of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, although my reins be consumed within me."

—How, then, could "life and immortality be brought to light through the gospel?" We answer. The word gospel may be taken two ways. The one more general, for revelation at large; and thus it is to be understood when it is said, "The gospel was preached to the Jews, but the word preached did not profit them." And thus it is to be understood when it is said, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." The other is more restricted, and signifies the evangelical dispensation: commencing with the ministry of our Lord, and including not only the discourses which he personally delivered, but all the inspired communications of the apostles. Now, if we take the word gospel here in the former sense, the meaning is, that it brought life and immortality to light *really*. But if taken in the latter sense, then the meaning is, that it brought life and immortality to light *pre-eminently*. And it must be confessed that this is the more common acceptation of the term, and so it is required to be taken in the passage before us. The dawn was visible before: but now the day appeared. To the Jews the Sun of Righteousness was below the horizon; on us he has risen with healing under his wings; and Christians are all the children of the light and of the day: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Hence our Saviour said to his disciples—not comparing them with the Gentiles, but with their own nation: "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things which ye hear, and have



not heard them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear."

Therefore, while for a knowledge of life and immortality we repair to the Scripture *only*, we must look *peculiarly* into the New Testament, where we are furnished with clearer decisions, and ampler representations; and above all, with illustrations and pledges, in a risen and glorified Saviour.—Here again, the unrivalled excellency of Christianity appears. How unsatisfactory, how cold, how mean, how gross, how absurd, how disgusting, are the intimations of Deism, the Elysian fields of Pagan poetry, the rewards of Hindooism, the paradise of Mohammedism—when placed by the side of the "life and immortality brought to light through the gospel!"

Through the discoveries of this gospel we are going to finish our series of Lectures, by viewing the Christian in his final destination. You have seen him—In CHRIST, the source of all his principles, and consolations, and hopes. You have seen him—Withdrawing into his CLOSET, and dealing much with God alone. You have seen him—Leaving his retirement, and stepping into his FAMILY, and with his house serving God. You have seen him—Joining himself to God's people; and walking in the CHURCH in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. You have seen him—In the WORLD, but not of it. You have seen him—Safe and sanctified in PROSPERITY. You have seen him—Supported and comforted in ADVERSITY. You have seen him—In his SPIRITUAL SORROWS hanging his harp on the willows. You have seen—The Joy of the Lord his strength. You have surveyed him—In the valley of the shadow of DEATH; and have seen that his end is peace. You have seen him though—Laid in the GRAVE, not left there; but rising into newness of life. And now you are to view him—In HEAVEN. Four things will engage your attention. The

I. REGARDS THE DEGREE OF OUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.—The

II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SCRIPTURE AIDS US IN CONCEIVING OF A SUBJECT SO VAST AND DIFFICULT.—The

III. ITS PRINCIPAL CONSTITUENTS.—And

IV. THE INSTRUCTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS WE SHOULD DERIVE FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THE POSSESSION OF IT.

I. REGARDS THE DEGREE OF OUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

Have you never, my brethren, when perusing the sacred writings, been struck with a kind of contradiction? Here, in one place, you say, I read that "life and immortality *are* brought to light;" and in another, I am told of "the glory that *shall* be revealed." In one I am assured, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And yet in another it is said, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." But this apparent contradiction supplies us with the fact we are remarking; and the apostle John has fully expressed it when he says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." That is, we know something of it; but much, very much, remains concealed.—We have some developments in the sacred pages, and in the illuminations of the Holy Ghost—

Yet we are able only to survey

Dawnings of beams, and glimmerings of day;  
Heaven's fuller affluence mocks our dazzled sight;  
Too great its swiftness, and too strong its light.

Of the full disclosure of the heavenly world, there is a moral and a natural prevention. It would not be proper, if it were possible; and it would not be possible, if it were proper. Let us explain.

The only wise God has attempted even our senses to our present condition. The measure in which we possess them, is admirably fitted to the functions and enjoyments of life. It is easy to perceive that if our feeling was more exquisite, it would annoy us; and that if our hearing was increased, it would prove our inconvenience; and that if our eye was to become microscopic, we should be afraid to move. It is precisely the same with our knowledge. This is adjusted in conformity to the claims of our present sphere of action and happiness. We are now in a mixed state, where sorrow is necessary as well as pleasure; and darkness as well as light. Some duties, if they do not entirely result from our ignorance, are enforced by it. Witness the admonition of the Saviour: "Watch, *for ye know not the day or the hour* wherein the Son of man cometh." We are in a course of trial and discipline; where the grand principle of our training is confidence; where we are to walk by faith, and not by sight; for we are to honor God by trusting in him; and to follow the example of our father Abraham, who "by faith, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went"—satisfied with his Guide, and the assurance he had received; and leaving all the inquiries which restless curiosity, and proud reasonings, and conferring with flesh and blood, would have gendered, as unworthy a thought.

We may venture to affirm, that if heaven was now fully laid open to our view, it would be so impressive and engrossing, as to render every thing here insignificant and uninteresting, and loosen and detach us from all our present engagements. St. Pierre tells us of his returning to France in a ship that had been absent several years in the East Indies. "And when," says he, "the crew approached their native country, they were all eagerness to discern it. Some of them mounted the rigging: some of them employed the glass. By-and-by an exclamation was heard, 'Yonder it is!' Then they became thoughtful, and listless. But when they drew nearer and began to discover the tops of the hills and towers, that reminded them of the spots on which they had been brought up; they knew not how to contain themselves. They dressed themselves in their best apparel; they brought out the presents designed for their connections. But when the vessel entered the harbor; and they saw their friends and relations on the quay, stretching forth their hands to embrace them, many of them leaped from the ship, and other hands were employed to bring it to its moorings." Ah! Christians, could you see the better country from which you were born, and to which you are bound—could you behold your connections there, ready to receive you; your station would soon be deserted, and other agents would be wanted to carry on their concerns.

We go further! and we say that the full disclosure of heaven would not only derange the present order of things, but endanger, injure, and destroy the very being to whom it was presented. Our physical powers have their limits; and from many instances in the Scriptures, we see the effects of an excess of excitement or impression. Accustomed as she was to grandeur, the queen of Sheba, at the sight of Solomon's glory, had no more spirit in her. Jacob fainted away when he saw the wagons to convey him to his son Joseph. When the angel approached Daniel, there was no strength in him, for his comeliness was turned in him to corruption. And though John had often reclined on his bosom.

when the Saviour appeared to him, he fell at his feet as dead. No; we have not eyes to see that brilliancy now; we have not ears to endure that melody now; we have not frames to bear up under that weight of glory now. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

The full knowledge, therefore, is no more practicable than it is expedient. We have no adequate medium of receiving the communication; and heaven entering the mind now, is like the sun entering the house through a few little crevices, or the sea flowing through the hollow of a straw.—There is an amazing force in language, as we see in some most powerful and affecting works: but words, however chosen, can no more express heaven, than paint can do justice to light, or heat, or joy. All our modes of apprehending and feeling, are not refined and exalted enough to take a complete hold of an object so peculiar and spiritual.—Even our thoughts, that seem to "leave dull mortality behind," here labor and strive in vain: and one of the sublimest understandings that ever soared, even also when inspired, could only exclaim, "Oh! how great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee."

This, however, is not to be taken absolutely. With all our deficiencies, we are not ignorant of the reality of this glory; nor are we unfurnished with such a *degree* of information concerning it, as our duty and our welfare allow and require.—And we proceed,

## II. To observe how the SCRIPTURE AIDS US IN CONCEIVING OF A SUBJECT SO DIFFICULT AND VAST.

It does this four ways.

*First*, It enables us to conceive of it *negatively*. Thus it tells us what it is not, removing from it every thing we know and feel to be dreadful, or trying, or distressing. And such representations we are prepared to understand and to feel, by a sad and common experience. For often in a world like this, our most lively apprehension of good is the removal of evil; and our most inviting notion of joy is the cessation of grief. Hence the sacred writers assure us, "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. There shall be no more curse. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

*Secondly*, It enables us to conceive of it *figuratively*. Figures are like dress; they are now used for ornament, but they were introduced from necessity. They were originally used not to embellish, but to explain; and we want them for the same purpose still. How can the mind, while incarnate, any more discern than operate, but through the senses, the mediums of all sensation and reflection? How can we reach the distant, but by the intervention of what is near? How can we understand what is difficult, but by the application of what is familiar? How can we hold communion with things unseen and eternal, but by means of those which are seen and temporal? What wonder therefore that the wisdom of God should have levied a tax on all that is inviting in the intercourses of life, and in the productions and appearances of nature, to afford us emblems and illustrations? What wonder that we should read of rivers of pleasure: of trees of life; of robes and crowns; of feastings and mirth; of treasures and triumphs—and a thousand other images serving to hold forth a little of the better and enduring substance?

*Thirdly*, It helps us to conceive of it *comparatively*. It is a blessed change Christians now expe-

rience in passing from death unto life. Now are they the sons of God; and they have the Spirit of adoption. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and they know the things that are freely given them of God. But though the sacred writers view grace and glory as inseparable, and indeed consider them as the same in kind, they remark the difference there is in degree. Here the new creature is in its infancy; there it comes to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ. Here we are faithful over a few things; there we are made rulers over many things. Here we are saved by hope; there we possess the reality. Here we walk by faith; there by sight. Now we have the first-fruits of the Spirit; then the whole harvest. Now we have the earnest; then the inheritance.

The Christian is therefore led from his present experience to his future attainments; and there is no way of his conceiving of heaven so affecting, as to take his best views and frames now, and to imagine them perfect and perpetual. He can learn more from one hour's communion with God, than from all the books he ever read. There are ordinances, in the use of which he is sometimes filled with all joy and peace in believing; and he can say,

"If such the sweetness of the streams,

What must the fountain be;

Where saints and angels draw their bliss  
Immediately from Thee?"

There are spots in his walks rendered sacred by his meeting his Lord and Saviour, and talking with him as a man talketh with his friend. In his vernal or autumnal retreats from the haunts of men, he has sat beneath the branches of his favorite tree, and has felt a perfect sympathy with all that is innocent and beautiful around him; and every thing earthly has been reduced to its just level in his regards; and the world has been conquered, having nothing to tempt and nothing to terrify; and even death has been frownless; and, ready to be dissolved, he could sing,

"O that the happy hour was come,

To change my faith to sight!

I shall behold my Lord at home  
In a diviner light."

*Finally*, It helps us to conceive of it *positively*.—Telling us plainly, "That the upright shall dwell in his presence. That blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. That when He who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory. The righteous shall go away into life eternal."—Yet what does this mean? What does it include?—And what

## III. ARE THE PRINCIPAL CONSTITUENTS OF THE HEAVENLY STATE.

Here we will not trifle, or pry into things which we have not seen. We shall not therefore enlarge on many topics which have commonly been connected with the subject; and the reason is, either because they are not so explicitly revealed, or because they are not so important in themselves, as those articles which we are going to enumerate.

It has been asked, Are there degrees in glory?—We are persuaded there are. All analogy countenances the conclusion. We see degrees and inequalities pervading all the works of God. We know there are gradations among angels; for we read of thrones and dominions, principalities and powers. And though all Christians are redeemed by the same blood, and justified by the same righteousness, we know that there are degrees in grace. We know the good ground brought forth in some places thirty



in some sixty, in some a hundred fold. And the Apostle tells us, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." But here we approve of the old illustration—however unequal in size these vessels may be, when plunged into this ocean, they shall all be equally filled.

It has been asked, Shall we know each other in heaven? Suppose you should not; you may be assured of this, that nothing will be wanting to your happiness. But O, you say, how would the thought affect me now! There is the babe that was torn from my bosom; how lovely then, but a cherub now. There is the friend, who was as mine own soul, with whom I took sweet counsel, and went to the house of God in company. There is the dear minister—whose preaching turned my feet into the path of peace—whose words were to me a well of life.—There is the beloved mother, on whose knees I first laid my little hands to pray, and whose lips first taught my tongue to pronounce the name of Jesus! And are these removed from us for ever? Shall we recognize them no more?—Cease your anxieties. Can memory be annihilated? Did not Peter, James, and John know Moses and Elias? Does not the Saviour inform us that the friends, benefactors have made of the mammon of unrighteousness, shall receive them into everlasting habitations?—Does not Paul tell the Thessalonians, that they are his hope, and joy, and crown at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Some would ask, Where is heaven? The universe is immense; but what particular part of it is assigned for the abode of the blessed, we cannot determine. It will probably be our present system renovated. May we not infer this from the words of the Apostle Peter—"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat—Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

But is it a place? Our Lord has a body like our own; and this cannot be omnipresent; and wherever he is corporeally, there is heaven—"Where I am, there shall also my servants be." Enoch and Elias have bodies; all the saints will have bodies; and these cannot be everywhere. We read of "the hope laid up for us in heaven." Of "entering into the holy place." "And I go," says Jesus to his disciples, "to prepare a place for you." But though it is really a place, we must chiefly consider it as a state. Even now, happiness does not essentially depend on what is without us. What was Eden to Adam and Eve, after sin had filled them with shame, and sorrow, and fear? But Paul in prison was infinitely happier than Cæsar on the throne of the nations.

What then are we allowed to reckon upon as the grand component parts of this exalted state? You may reckon upon

—*Pre-eminent knowledge.* This is a world of action rather than of science; and the wiser men are, the more readily will they confess, that their present knowledge is unspeakably less than their ignorance. In whatever direction they attempt to penetrate, they are checked and baffled. Laboriousness attends every acquirement; and doubts and uncertainties diminish the value of every possession.—The difference between the knowledge of Newton and the most illiterate peasant, will be far exceeded by the difference between the knowledge of the Christian on earth and in heaven. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold as the light of seven days, when the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Now they understand as children, then they will know as men.

Now they see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now they know in part, then they will know even as they are known. How delightful the thought—amidst my present perplexities and obscurities, and under a sense of the penury of my talents, and in the want of means and opportunities of improvement, that "Messiah cometh who is called Christ; and that when he is come, he will tell us all things." You may reckon upon

—*Perfect purity.* This announcement has little attraction for those of you who never saw the beauty of holiness, and never abhorred yourselves, repenting in dust and ashes. But O! to a Christian it is worth dying for, to leave behind him the body of this death; this law in the members warring against the law of his mind; this inability to do the things that he would; this presence of evil ever with him; this liableness, this proneness to sin, even in his holy things—tarnishing every duty, wounding his own peace, and vexing and grieving the Spirit of his best Friend. To be freed from the enemy, and to have nothing in me that temptation can operate upon! To be incapable of ingratitude, and unbelief, and distractions in duty! To be innocent as the first Adam, and holy as the second!—What wonder, the Christian exclaims, with Henry, "If this be heaven, O! that I were there."—You may reckon upon

—*The most delightful associations.* We are formed for society. Much of our present happiness results from attachment and intercourse. Who knows not "the comforts of love?" Yea, and who knows not its sorrows also? We must weep when the objects of our affection weep. The arrows that pierce our friends wound us also. We tolerate, we excuse their imperfections, but we feel them. And the thought of absence—separation—death—is dreariness, pain and anguish. Hence, some have been ready to envy the unrelated, unconnected individual, whose anxieties and griefs are all personal. But it is not good for man to be alone in any condition.—It is better to follow the course of providence; to cherish the intimacies of life; to improve and to sanctify them; and under the disadvantages which now mingle with them, to look forward to a state where the honey will be without the sting, and the rose without the thorn; and attachment and intercourse without the deductions arising from pain, and infirmities, and pity, and fear. In the Revelation, heaven is always presented as a social state.—You have now few holy companions; the many are going another way. But, says John, "I beheld, and, lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And you will have access to them all. You will there have the most endeared society; for it will include those to whom you were so tenderly related by nature, or pious friendship, and at parting with whom you sorrowed most of all, that you should see their face and hear their voice no more; and also those you left behind you with reluctance and anxiety in a world of sin and trouble. With these, your fellowship, after a brief separation, will be renewed, improved, and perfected for ever. The society will also be the most dignified; and without its present embarrassments. There are now personages so superior, that you seem reduced to nothing at the thought of them. You esteem and admire them; and wish to hear, and see, and mingle with them; yet you shrink from the presence of such genius, wisdom, and goodness. But you will feel nothing of this, when you sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and with

prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and reformers in the kingdom of God. Nor will *saints* only be your companions; but those glorious beings who never sinned; who excel in strength; who are proverbial for their wisdom; who are your models in doing the will of God on earth; who are your ministering spirits, invisibly watching over you in your minority—the innumerable company of *angels*. And though they will not be able to say, He hath redeemed us, unto God by his blood; they will cry with a loud voice—though you will endeavor to be louder—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”—You may reckon upon

—The most *glorious employment*. I should as soon think that heaven was a nursery of vice, as a state of inaction. Indolence is no more irreconcilable to virtue, than perfectly incompatible with happiness.

“A want of occupation is not rest.

A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.”

All the powers conferred by a wise Creator necessarily imply their application and use: and the more life any being possesses, the more energy and activity will distinguish him, unless he is in a state of perversion or restraint. But what are the employments of heaven? Dr. Watts has speculated much on this subject. Some of his conjectures are probable, and all pleasing. But we dare not follow him. Of this we are sure, that there will be none of those mean and degrading toils which arise now from the necessities of our nature, or from luxury and pride. Neither will there be any of those religious exercises which pertain to a state of imperfection. Repentance will be hid from our eyes. There will be no more warfare and watchings. Neither will there be any more prayers with strong cryings and tears. Yet it is said, “They serve him day and night in his temple.” And their powers will be equal to the work; for neither the fervency nor the duration of the service will produce exhaustion or languor. The common notion of always standing up and singing, is too childish to be entertained.—We have no doubt but that there may be stated assemblies for adoration and praise. But Christians are said to be still praising him now; and they do this, not by acts of worship only, but by performing his will, by filling up their stations in life properly, and promoting the welfare of all around them; and his work even here is honorable and glorious.

—On the *presence and sight* of the Saviour, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, you may reckon; and you *will* reckon—and reckon *supremely*—if you are a Christian. “Ah!” says Paul, “I long to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.” “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” What would every thing be in his absence! Could the place, the company, the harps, be a substitute for him? But here is the consummation—you shall “serve him and see his face.” You need not envy those who knew him after the flesh; *you* will have access to him; *you* will see the King, and see him in his beauty. He is now with *you*. He knows your soul in adversity; and comes to you as a friend, and helper, and comforter. But you are now in prison. His visits, when he looks upon you through the bars, and brings you supplies, and communes with you in the cell, are relieving. They solace the confinement; you wish them multiplied; you expect them with joy. But the best of all these visits will be the last, when he will come not only to you, but *for* you: when he will open the doors of the dungeon, and knock off the fetters, and take you home to his pa-

lace. Then you will be *with him*: you will “walk with” him “in white;” you will “eat and drink at his table in his kingdom;” you will “be for ever with the Lord.” It is hardly necessary to say, that you may reckon upon

—The most *exquisite enjoyment*. This will spring abundantly from all the foregoing sources, and especially the last. It will far transcend every feeling we have had of delight and ecstasy here. The state itself is expressed by it. “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Jude says, we shall be “presented before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.” And says David, “In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” For you may reckon upon

The *perpetuity* of all this. “Permanency,” says the poet, “adds bliss to bliss.” But here it is absolutely indispensable even to the happiness itself: for the greater the blessedness, the more miserable we should feel if it were in danger. Who in the possession of such a prize, could exist under the thought of losing it? How careful therefore are the sacred writers never to leave out this *essential* attribute, in any of their descriptions. If it be life, it is “eternal” life. If it be salvation, it is “everlasting” salvation. If it be a kingdom, it is a kingdom that “cannot be shaken.” If it be a crown, it is a crown of “glory, that fadeth not away.”

To which we may add, that you may reckon not only on the eternity, but the *increase*. Who could think of being doomed to remain stationary? How irksome would any condition be, in which there could be no possibility of advance and improvement? But your faculties will not be confined to a circle of sameness: they will be free; they will break forth on every side. How much more do the angels know now than once; and yet still they desire to look into the Saviour’s sufferings and glory. How often will there be new songs in heaven, or fresh exclamations of admiration and praise, from fresh discoveries and displays of the perfections of God, in his works and ways. Every finite being is capable of accession; and in knowing, and doing, and attaining, and enjoying, there will be an infinite progression before us.

If with this account of heaven you are dissatisfied, be assured, the Lecturer is still more so. Who, upon such a subject, can speak worthily? I will therefore no longer darken counsel with words without knowledge, but conclude by calling upon you,

IV. TO BEHOLD THE CHRISTIAN IN HIS FINAL DESTINY, AND TO REMARK THE INSTRUCTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS THAT SHOULD ARISE FROM THE CONTEMPLATION.

Behold him *there*, as a *monument of divine grace*. What was he *once*? He will not be unwilling to look to the rock whence he was hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence he was digged. He will acknowledge that by nature he was a child of wrath even as others; condemned by the law of God; a fallen, guilty, depraved creature; his powers all defiled and desolate; helpless and ready to perish. But what is he *now*? Redeemed; justified; renewed; quickened together with Christ; raised up and made to sit with him in the heavenly places. And *whence* is all this? Is it by his own worthiness, or righteousness, or strength, that he has made himself whole? “This people,” says God, “have I formed for myself; they shall show forth *my* praise.” Here he has placed them to display in their salvation the freeness, the power, and the fulness of his grace—that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards them by Christ Jesus. And falling in completely with this design, they cast their crowns at his feet and exclaim, “Not unto us, O Lord, not



unto us, but unto thy name, give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake. By the grace of God I am what I am. Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Behold him *THERE*, and see the conduct of God towards him in this world explained and vindicated. It will be acknowledged that though God does much for his people here, yet the relation in which he has been pleased to place himself, implies and requires far more than he *now* performs. A future state of munificent liberality is therefore necessary. To this he appeals, and by this his promises are to be estimated. Hence says the apostle, "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, seeing he hath prepared for them a city." Here, while the wicked prospered, and had more than heart could wish, the righteous were poor, and oppressed, and afflicted; plagued every morning, and chastened every moment. And you were ready to ask, If they are his, why are they thus? You were so perplexed at the strangeness of his providence towards them, that your feet were almost gone, and your steps had well nigh slipped. But even then, he told you that his ways are not our ways; he told you that his people were under an economy, a very small part of which falls within your inspection; he told you that the dispensations you complained of were not yet terminated: he said, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." But here is the full answer. Look at them now. All that was darkness, is now illuminated: all that appeared disorderly, is now arranged: all that seemed evil, is now acknowledged good. Now we have the clue, and the difficulties are loosened. Now we have the end, and this justifies the means. We now see by what his dispensations towards them were regulated, and in what they have resulted. They were chastened of the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world. The trial of their faith was much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, because it was to be found unto praise, and glory, and honor, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. The light afflictions which were but for a moment, have worked out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They themselves are more than satisfied. They acknowledge that he hath dealt well with his servants. They exclaim, He hath done all things well. "Marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, O thou King of saints."

—Behold the GLORIFIED Christian, and see the justification of his choice. Here, his fellow-creatures despised him, or affected to pity. If they allowed him to be sincere, they reproached him as weak, and considered his life a system of restraints, and privations, and sacrifices. Even *then* wisdom was justified of all her children. Even *then* they were conscious that reason itself bore them out in their preference. Even *then* they were not ashamed of their self-denial or sufferings, for they knew whom they had believed; and were persuaded that he was able to keep that which they had committed unto him against that day. Even *then* they rejoiced in the testimony of their consciences, and the secret smiles and whispers of their Lord and Saviour. But the world knew them not. They were princes in disguise. Their titles were refused, and their honors and riches were turned to scorn. And they bore this with firmness and patience—for they saw that their day was coming. And lo! now it is arrived. Now they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Now is the manifestation of the sons of God. Now their enemies return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. And oh! how changed their sentiments and their language now. "We fools counted their

life madness, and their end to be without honor! Now are they numbered with the saints, and their lot is among the children of God."

—Contemplate him *WHERE* he is, and *inquire whether you will be a partaker of the same blessedness*. Is it not astonishing that you can put such a question from you, as if it was the greatest impertinence, from week to week, from year to year, though in the midst of life you are in death, and after death is the judgment? And is it not strange that others can remain in a state of indecision, with only such a peradventure as this to support their peace—*Perhaps I am in the way to heaven, and perhaps I am in the way to hell!* What is your real condition with regard to that eternity, on the verge of which you are? Have you a *title* to glory? This results from relationship: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Have you any *meetness* for the inheritance of the saints in light? Without this you cannot see the kingdom of God—not only for want of permission, but for want of capacity. Threatenings are not necessary to exclude—your disposition bars you out. The excellency of the state cannot make you happy without an adaptation to it: your contrariety of temper and taste would make you miserable. "God has wrought us," says the apostle, "for the self-same thing." Has he done this for you? Have you any thing in you that is congenial with heaven? Heaven is a holy place. Are you hungering and thirsting after righteousness? It consists in the presence and adoration of Christ. Are you at home now when you are saying—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion. There all religious distinctions will be done away; and the question will be, not where you have worshipped, but only how. Can you now rise above a party and say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?" Many of you *do not* hope for heaven; *do not* desire it. You *cannot* hope for it, you *cannot* desire it—unless you can love and enjoy its ingredients now.

—Let the CONTEMPLATION bring you upon your knees, and be *this your prayer*: "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, and glory with thine inheritance." O! how shall I plead with you for this purpose? By what motives can I urge you to make it your immediate and prevailing concern?

Need I remind you of the importance of the object? Glory! Honor! Immortality! An eternity, an infinity, of blessedness!

—Need you to be told that it is placed within your attainment—that you are allowed, invited, commanded to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, with an assurance of success? And if you perish, what an aggravation of your misery will this produce! When an event is unavoidable, you may lament, but you feel no self-reproach. When you suffer innocently, conscience even commends you; you feel a little of the spirit of a martyr; you claim on your side a God of judgment, and believe that in due time he will appear on your behalf. But here you will be speechless. You will feel that you have destroyed yourselves. Your misery will be your greatest *sin*. Every month will be stopped; and you will be found guilty before God. Guilty of what? Of transgressing his law. Yes—but still more of neglecting so great salvation, of rejecting the counsel of God against yourselves, and judging yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.

And allow me to ask, for what is it that you are determined to sacrifice this attainable and infinite

soon? Are you not spending your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? You condemn the folly of Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. You reproach Adam and Eve, who lost the garden of Eden for a taste of the forbidden tree. But you are making a far worse, a far viler exchange. You are sacrificing all the glory of God and the Lamb—I again ask, for what? You would be losers if you gained the whole world. But are you gaining empires? provinces? estates? Are you gaining reputation? The esteem of the wise and good? Health? Peace of mind? Support in trouble? Freedom from fear? Sin ought to yield you much, for it will cost you dear. But the way of transgressors is hard. There is no peace to the wicked. When you lie down in sorrow, how will you answer the question, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of these things is death." Remember also the alternative.

—For missing this, there is nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to devour the adversary. If you are not with the sheep at the right hand, you must be with the goats at the left. If you hear not the sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," you must hear the doom, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

*Lastly.* Let us look and hail those who can make the prospect their own. We talk of happiness! Can any thing equal the state of those who can humbly and confidently say, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God?" Many are in adversity and tribulation; and yet have no such prospect. All is fighting against them, and they have no refuge. Their thoughts are broken off; even the purposes of their hearts, and their earthly schemes, laid desolate; yet they have nothing better before them. Yea, conscience tells them, this is only the beginning of sorrows; the short preface to a long roll written within and without, with lamentation, and mourning, and wo. But to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. He sees the storm beginning to clear up: and he knows that no cloud shall return after the rain. "I reckon," says he, "that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Soon, want will be followed with fulness.—Soon, the wormwood and the gall will be succeeded by the cup of salvation.

"Yet a season, and we know  
Happy entrance shall be given;  
All our sorrows left below,  
And earth exchanged for heaven."

With this prospect, how superior is he to the envied, the indulged, the successful man of the world. He has his portion in this life; but, says the Christian, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." His good things are temporal; mine are eternal. He is leaving his; I am advancing to mine. Every hour diminishes the value of his hope; but every moment adds interest to mine.

Nor need the Christian envy the man of claims

merely intellectual. Wisdom indeed excelleth folly, as much as light excellet darkness. Money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it. But what wisdom? It was a fine reply of the converted astronomer, who, when interrogated concerning the science which he had been idolizing, answered, "I am now bound for heaven, and I take the stars in my way." How humiliating is it to reflect, that the treasures of learning and science depend upon the brain; that an accident of disease may abolish them; or that, at most, they are limited to the life that now is, and which we spend as a shadow.—Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away—unless it be the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord—for this life is eternal.

In much wisdom also, there is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow. Some of the most expansive and cultivated minds are the most miserable. Nor is it difficult to account for this. Genius implies a sensibility which strangers intermeddle not with. It is attended with a keenness of feeling, that renders the possessor like a sensitive plant, that shrinks at every touch. He lives in a world of imagination, as well as a world of reality. He views nothing simply and purely. Every thing is dressed up to his conceptions; the beautiful in preternatural times, and the evil in preternatural horrors. His thoughts are sentiments. He feels intensely: and nothing very intense can continue. Then follows a void which is irksome, and a listlessness which is intolerable, and which are sometimes productive of fatal effects. In Madame de Stael's Memoirs of her father, we have the following remark: "I have a proof," says Mr. Necker, "of the immortality of the soul in this; that it is at least after a while desirable; and essential to our happiness. By the time we have reached threescore years and ten, we have looked around us, and become familiar with the whole scene: and though not satisfied, we are sated. Then we feel our need of a new residence; a new sphere of activity; and new sources of employment and enjoyment." This is a striking remark; and we may observe, that if at such a period, religion with its motives and promises is not present to the mind, the man wearied of existence, and feeling every thing here to be vanity, is likely to become the victim of an insupportable oppression, and in a moment of rashness may welcome self-destruction. Have we had no instances of this?

—Here the Christian is guarded; here he is provided for. As this world falls upon him, an other opens to his view. This prospect enlivens the solitudes which bereavement and decays of nature have produced. This prospect becomes a substitute for the scenes and charms which have faded and fled. This prospect entertains and engages, now the days are come in which he says, I have no pleasure in them. The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day. His heart and his flesh fail; but God is the strength of his heart and his portion for ever. He departs; but he leaves what is not his rest, what is polluted, what is nigh unto cursing, and whose end is to be burned—while he enters a creation where every thing that is new, and marvellous, and pure, and attractive, and beautifying, says, Arise, and come away. And the hour that obscures and quenches for ever all other glories, immortalizes him.



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